MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

CHARLES DICKENS : Born 1812—Died 1870

Editor's Note

This collection of Dicken's miscellaneous writings comprises what is considered the best of those contributions contained in the two collections : first, that published by him in 1858 *under the title of* Reprinted Pieces ; *second, the "miscellaneous papers" published by the late B. W. Matz, who extracted them from "Household Words," "The Examiner," and other periodicals. The task of identifying his miscellaneous writings, except those reprinted by him, was not completely manageable for many years—even by his son and by expert Dickensians. The difficulties that long existed in the case of "Household Words" are interesting. Dickens so much "edited," and even re-wrote, the anonymous articles written for that paper by his "brilliant young men," who also dropped into the master's style, that identification was extremely hazardous. Fortunately, however, the Contributors' Book kept in connection with "Household Words" came to light ; and, as this gave details of all contributions, their writers, and the fees paid for them, it was the means of solving many problems and correcting wrong attributions.*

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BY
CHARLES DICKENS

LONDON:
HAZELL, WATSON & VINEY, LTD.

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THE BEGGING-LETTER WRITER

THE amount of money he annually diverts from wholesome and useful purposes in the United Kingdom, would be a set-off against the Window Tax. He is one of the most shameless frauds and impositions of this time. In his idleness, his mendacity, and the immeasurable harm he does to the deserving,—dirtying the stream of true benevolence, and muddling the brains of foolish justices, with inability to distinguish between the base coin of distress, and the true currency we have always among us,—he is more worthy of Norfolk Island than three-fourths of the worst characters who are sent there. Under any rational system, he would have been sent there long ago.

I, the writer of this paper, have been, for some time, a chosen receiver of Begging Letters. For fourteen years, my house has been made as regular a Receiving House for such communications as any one of the great branch Post-Offices is for general correspondence. I ought to know something of the Begging-Letter Writer. He has besieged my door at all hours of the day and night; he has fought my servant; he has lain in ambush for me, going out and coming in; he has followed me out of town into the country; he has appeared at provincial hotels, where I have been staying for only a few hours; he has written to me from immense distances, when I have been out of England. He has fallen sick; he has died and been buried; he has come to life again, and again departed from this transitory scene: he has been his own son, his own mother, his own baby, his idiot brother, his uncle, his aunt, his aged grandfather. He has wanted a greatcoat, to go to India in; a pound to set him up in life for ever; a pair of boots to take him to the coast of China; a hat to get him into a permanent situation under Government. He has frequently been exactly seven-and-sixpence short of independence. He has had such openings at Liverpool—posts of great trust and confidence in merchants' houses, which nothing but seven-and-sixpence was wanting to him to secure—that I wonder he is not Mayor of that flourishing town at the present moment.

The natural phenomena of which he has been the victim, are of a most astounding nature. He has had two children who have never grown up; who have never had anything to cover them at night; who have been continually driving him mad, by asking in vain for food; who have never come out of fevers and measles (which, I suppose, has accounted for his fuming his letters with tobacco smoke, as a disinfectant); who have never changed in the least degree through fourteen long revolving years. As to his wife, what that suffering woman has undergone, nobody knows. She has always been in an interesting situation through the same long period, and has never been confined yet. His devotion to her has been unceasing. He has never cared for himself; *he* could have perished—he would rather, in short—but was it not his Christian duty as a man, a husband, and a father, to write begging letters when he looked at her? (He has usually remarked that he would call in the evening for an answer to this question.)

He has been the sport of the strangest misfortunes. What his brother has done to him would have broken anybody else's heart. His brother went into business with him, and ran away with the money; his brother got him to be security for an immense sum and left him to pay it; his brother would have given him employment to the tune of hundreds a-year, if he would have consented to write letters on a Sunday; his brother enunciated principles incompatible with his religious views, and he could not (in consequence) permit his brother to provide for him. His landlord has never shown a spark of human feeling. When he put in that execution I don't know, but he has never taken it out. The broker's man has grown grey in possession. They will have to bury him some day.

He has been attached to every conceivable pursuit. He has been in the army, in the navy, in the church, in the law; connected with the press, the fine arts, public institutions, every description and grade of business. He has been brought up as a gentleman; he has been at every college in Oxford and Cambridge; he can quote Latin in his letters (but generally mis-spells some minor English word); he can tell you what Shakespeare says about begging, better than you know it. It is to be observed, that in the midst of his afflictions he always reads the newspapers; and rounds off his appeal with some allusion, that may be supposed to be in my way, to the popular subject of the hour.

His life presents a series of inconsistencies. Sometimes he has never written such a letter before. He blushes with shame. That is the first time; that shall be the last. Don't answer it, and let it be understood that, then, he will kill himself quietly. Sometimes (and more frequently) he *has* written a few such letters. Then he encloses the answers, with an intimation that they are of inestimable value to him, and a request that they may be carefully returned. He is fond of enclosing something—verses, letters, pawnbrokers' duplicates, anything to necessitate an answer. He is very severe upon "the pampered minion of fortune," who refused him the half-sovereign referred to in the enclosure number two—but he knows me better.

He writes in a variety of styles; sometimes in low spirits; sometimes quite jocosely. When he is in low spirits he writes down-hill and repeats words—these little indications being expressive of the perturbation of his mind. When he is more vivacious, he is frank with me; he is quite the agreeable rattle. I know what human nature is,—who better? Well! He had a little money once, and he ran through it—as many men have done before him. He finds his old friends turn away from him now—many men have done that before him too! Shall he tell me why he writes to me? Because he has no kind of claim upon me. He puts it on that ground plainly; and begs to ask for the loan (as I know human nature) of two sovereigns, to be repaid next Tuesday six weeks, before twelve at noon.

Sometimes, when he is sure that I have found him out, and that there is no chance of money, he writes to inform me that I have got rid of him at last. He has enlisted into the Company's service, and is off directly—but he wants a cheese. He is informed by the serjeant that it is essential to his prospects in the regiment that he should take out a single Gloucester cheese, weighing from twelve to fifteen pounds. Eight or nine shillings would buy it. He does not ask for money, after what has passed; but if he calls at nine to-morrow morning may he hope to find a cheese? And is there anything he can do to show his gratitude in Bengal?

Once he wrote me rather a special letter, proposing relief in kind. He had got into a little trouble by leaving parcels of mud done up in brown paper, at people's houses, on pretence of being a Railway-Porter, in which character he received carriage money. This sportive fancy he expiated in the House of Correction. Not long after his release, and on a Sunday morning, he called with a letter (having first dusted himself all over), in which he gave me to understand that, being resolved to earn an honest livelihood, he had been travelling about the country with a cart of crockery. That he had been doing pretty well until the day before, when his horse had dropped down dead near Chatham, in Kent. That this had reduced him to the unpleasant necessity of getting into the shafts himself, and drawing the cart of crockery to London—a somewhat exhausting pull of thirty miles. That he did not venture to ask again for money; but that if I would have the goodness *to leave him out a donkey*, he would call for the animal before breakfast!

At another time my friend (I am describing actual experiences) introduced himself as a literary gentleman in the last extremity of distress. He had had a play accepted at a certain Theatre—which was really open; its representation was delayed by the indisposition of a leading actor—who was really ill; and he and his were in a state of absolute starvation. If he made his necessities known to the Manager of the Theatre, he put it to me to say what kind of treatment he might expect? Well! we got over that difficulty to our mutual satisfaction. A little while afterwards he was in some other strait. I think Mrs. Southcote, his wife, was in extremity—and we adjusted that point too. A little while afterwards he had taken a new house, and was going headlong to ruin for want of a water-butt. I had my misgivings about the water-butt, and did not reply to that epistle. But a little while afterwards, I had reason to feel penitent for my neglect. He wrote me a few broken-hearted lines, informing me that the dear partner of his sorrows died in his arms last night at nine o'clock!

I despatched a trusty messenger to comfort the bereaved mourner and his poor children; but the messenger went so soon, that the play was not ready to be played out; my friend was not at home, and his wife was in a most delightful state of health. He was taken up by the Mendicity Society (informally it afterwards appeared), and I presented myself at a London Police-Office with my testimony against him. The Magistrate was wonderfully struck by his educational acquirements, deeply impressed by the excellence of his letters, exceedingly sorry to see a man of his attainments there, complimented him highly on his powers of composition, and was quite charmed to have the agreeable duty of discharging him. A collection was made for the " poor fellow," as he was called in the reports, and I left the court with a comfortable sense of being universally regarded as a sort of monster. Next day comes to me a friend of mine, the governor of a large prison. "Why did you ever go to the Police-Office against that man," says he, "without coming to me first? I know all about him and his frauds. He lodged in the house of one of my warders, at the very time when he first wrote to you; and then he was eating spring-lamb at eighteen-pence a pound, and early asparagus at I don't know how much a bundle!" On that very same day, and in that very same hour, my injured gentleman wrote a solemn address to me, demanding to know what compensation I proposed to make him for his having passed the night in a "loathsome dungeon." And next morning an Irish gentleman, a member of the same fraternity, who had read the case, and was very well persuaded I should be chary of going to that Police-Office again, positively refused to leave my door for less than a sovereign, and resolved to besiege me into compliance, literally "sat down" before it for ten mortal hours. The garrison being well provisioned, I remained within the walls; and he raised the siege at midnight with a prodigious alarum on the bell.

The Begging-Letter Writer often has an extensive circle of acquaintance. Whole pages of the "Court Guide" are ready to be references for him. Noblemen and gentlemen write to say there never was such a man for probity and virtue. They have known him time out of mind, and there is nothing they wouldn't do for him. Somehow, they don't give him that one pound ten he stands in need of; but perhaps it is not enough—they want to do more, and his modesty will not allow it. It is to be remarked of his trade that it is a very fascinating one. He never leaves it; and those who are near to him become smitten with a love of it, too, and sooner or later set up for themselves. He employs a messenger—man, woman, or child. That messenger is certain ultimately to become an independent Begging-Letter Writer. His sons and daughters succeed to his calling, and write begging-letters when he is no more. He throws off the infection of begging-letter writing, like the contagion of disease. What Sydney Smith so happily called "the dangerous luxury of dishonesty" is more tempting, and more catching, it would seem, in this instance than in any other.

He always belongs to a Corresponding-Society of Begging-Letter Writers. Any one who will, may ascertain this fact. Give money to-day in recognition of a begging-letter,—no matter how unlike a common begging-letter,—and for the next fortnight you will have a rush of such communications. Steadily refuse to give; and the begging-letters become Angels' visits, until the Society is from some cause or other in a dull way of business, and may as well try you as anybody else. It is of little use inquiring into the Begging-Letter Writer's circumstances. He may be sometimes accidentally found out, as in the case already mentioned (though that was not the first inquiry made); but apparent misery is always a part of his trade, and real misery very often is, in the intervals of spring-lamb and early asparagus. It is naturally an incident of his dissipated and dishonest life.

That the calling is a successful one, and that large sums of money are gained by it, must be evident to anybody who reads the Police Reports of such cases. But prosecutions are of rare occurrence, relatively to the extent to which the trade is carried on. The cause of this is to be found (as no one knows better than the Begging-Letter Writer, for it is a part of his speculation) in the aversion people feel to exhibit themselves as having been imposed upon, or as having weakly gratified their consciences with a lazy, flimsy substitute for the noblest of all virtues. There is a man at large, at the moment when this paper is preparing for the press (on the 29th of April, 1850), and never once taken up yet, who, within these twelve months, has been probably the most audacious and the most successful swindler that even this trade has ever known. There has been something singularly base in this fellow's proceedings; it has been his business to write to all sorts and conditions of people, in the names of persons of high reputation and unblemished honour, professing to be in distress—the general admiration and respect for whom has ensured a ready and generous reply.

Now, in the hope that the results of the real experience of a real person may do something more to induce reflection on this subject than any abstract treatise—and with a personal knowledge of the extent to which the Begging-Letter Trade has been carried on for some time, and has been for some time constantly increasing—the writer of this paper entreats the attention of his readers to a few concluding words. His experience is a type of the experience of many; some on a smaller, some on an infinitely larger scale. All may judge of the soundness or unsoundness of his conclusions from it.

Long doubtful of the efficacy of such assistance in any case whatever, and able to recall but one, within his whole individual knowledge, in which he had the least after-reason to suppose that any good was done by it, he was led, last autumn, into some serious considerations. The begging-letters flying about by every post made it perfectly manifest that a set of lazy vagabonds were interposed between the general desire to do something to relieve the sickness and misery under which the poor were suffering, and the suffering poor themselves. That many who sought to do some little to repair the social wrongs, inflicted in the way of preventible sickness and death upon the poor, were strengthening those wrongs, however innocently, by wasting money on pestilent knaves cumbering society. That imagination,—soberly following one of these knaves into his life of punishment in jail, and comparing it with the life of one of these poor in a cholera-stricken alley, or one of the children of one of these poor, soothed in its dying hour by the late lamented Mr. Droute,—contemplated a grim farce, impossible to be presented very much longer before God or man. That the crowning miracle of all the miracles summed up in the New Testament, after the miracle of the blind seeing, and the lame walking, and the restoration of the dead to life, was the miracle that the poor had the Gospel preached to them. That while the poor were unnaturally and unnecessarily cut off by the thousand, in the prematurity of their age, or in the rottenness of their youth—for of flower or blossom such youth has none—the Gospel was NOT preached to them, saving in hollow and unmeaning voices. That of all wrongs, this was the first mighty wrong the Pestilence warned us to set right. And that no Post-Office Order to any amount, given to a Begging-Letter Writer for the quieting of an uneasy breast, would be presentable on the Last Great Day as anything towards it.

The poor never write these letters. Nothing could be more unlike their habits. The writers are public robbers; and we who support them are parties to their depredations. They trade upon every circumstance within their knowledge that affects us, public or private, joyful or sorrowful; they pervert the lessons of our lives; they change what ought to be our strength and virtue into weakness and encouragement of vice. There is a plain remedy, and it is in our own hands. We must resolve, at any sacrifice of feeling, to be deaf to such appeals, and crush the trade.

There are degrees in murder. Life must be held sacred among us in more ways than one—sacred, not merely from the murderous weapon, or the subtle poison, or the cruel blow, but sacred from preventible diseases, distortions, and pains. That is the first great end we have to set against this miserable imposition. Physical life respected, moral life comes next. What will not content a Begging-Letter Writer for a week, would educate a score of children for a year. Let us give all we can; let us give more than ever. Let us do all we can; let us do more than ever. But let us give, and do, with a high purpose; not to endow the scum of the earth, to its own greater corruption, with the offals of our duty.

OUR ENGLISH WATERING-PLACE

In the Autumn-time of the year, when the great metropolis is so much hotter, so much noisier, so much more dusty or so much more water-carted, so much more crowded, so much more disturbing and distracting in all respects, than it usually is, a quiet sea-beach becomes indeed a blessed spot. Half awake and half asleep, this idle morning in our sunny window on the edge of a chalk-cliff in the old-fashioned watering-place to which we are a faithful resorter, we feel a lazy inclination to sketch its picture.

The place seems to respond. Sky, sea, beach, and village, lie as still before us as if they were sitting for the picture. It is dead low-water. A ripple plays among the ripening corn upon the cliff, as if it were faintly trying from recollection to imitate the sea; and the world of butterflies hovering over the crop of radish-seed are as restless in their little way as the gulls are in their larger manner when the wind blows. But the ocean lies winking in the sunlight like a drowsy lion—its glassy waters scarcely curve upon the shore—the fishing-boats in the tiny harbour are all stranded in the mud—our two colliers (our watering-place has a maritime trade employing that amount of shipping) have not an inch of water within a quarter of a mile of them, and turn, exhausted, on their sides, like faint fish of an antediluvian species. Rusty cables and chains, ropes and rings, undermost parts of posts and piles and confused timber-defences against the waves, lie strewn about, in a brown litter of tangled sea-weed and fallen cliff which looks as if a family of giants had been making tea here for ages, and had observed an untidy custom of throwing their tea-leaves on the shore.

In truth, our watering-place itself has been left somewhat high and dry by the tide of years. Concerned as we are for its honour, we must reluctantly admit that the time when this pretty little semi-circular sweep of houses tapering off at the end of the wooden pier into a point in the sea, was a gay place, and when the lighthouse overlooking it shone at daybreak on company dispersing from public balls, is but dimly traditional now. There is a bleak chamber in our watering-place which is yet called the Assembly "Rooms," and understood to be available on hire for balls or concerts; and, some few seasons since, an ancient little gentleman came down and stayed at the hotel, who said that he had danced there, in bygone ages, with the Honourable Miss Peepy, well known to have been the Beauty of her day and the cruel occasion of innumerable duels. But he was so old and shrivelled, and so very rheumatic in the legs, that it demanded more imagination than our watering-place can usually muster, to believe him; therefore, except the Master of the "Rooms" (who to this hour wears knee-breeches, and who confirmed the statement with tears in his eyes), nobody did believe in the little lame old gentleman, or even in the Honourable Miss Peepy, long deceased.

As to subscription balls in the Assembly Rooms of our watering-place now red-hot cannon balls are less improbable. Sometimes, a misguided wanderer of a Ventriloquist, or an Infant Phenomenon, or a Juggler, or somebody with an Orrery that is several stars behind the time, takes the place for a night, and issues bills with the name of his last town lined out, and the name of ours ignominiously written in, but you may be sure this never happens twice to the same unfortunate person. On such occasions the discoloured old Billiard Table that is seldom played at (unless the ghost of the Honourable Miss Peepy plays at pool with other ghosts) is pushed into a corner, and benches are solemnly constituted into front seats, back seats, and reserved seats—which are much the same after you have paid—and a few dull candles are lighted—wind permitting—and the performer and the scanty audience play out a short match which shall make the other most low-spirited—which is usually a drawn game. After that the performer instantly departs with maledictory expressions, and is never heard of more.

But the most wonderful feature of our Assembly Rooms, is, that an annual sale of "Fancy and other China," is announced here with mysterious constancy and perseverance. Where the china comes from, where it goes to, why it is annually put up to auction when nobody ever thinks of bidding for it, how it comes to pass that it is always the same china, whether it would not have been cheaper, with the sea at hand, to have thrown it away, say in eighteen hundred and thirty, are standing enigmas. Every year the bills come out, every year the Master of the Rooms gets into a little pulpit on a table, and offers it for sale, every year nobody buys it, every year it is put away somewhere till next year, when it appears again as if the whole thing were a new idea. We have a faint remembrance of an unearthly collection of clocks, purporting to be the work of Parisian and Genevese artists—chiefly bilious-faced clocks, supported on sickly white crutches, with their pendulums dangling like lame legs—to which a similar course of events occurred for several years, until they seemed to lapse away, of mere imbecility.

Attached to our Assembly Rooms is a library. There is a wheel of fortune in it, but it is rusty and dusty, and never turns. A large doll, with moveable eyes, was put up to be raffled for, by five-and-twenty members at two shillings, seven years ago this autumn, and the list is not full yet. We are rather sanguine, now, that the raffle will come off next year. We think so, because we only want nine members, and should only want eight, but for number two having grown up since her name was entered, and withdrawn it when she was married. Down the street, there is a toyship of considerable burden, in the same condition. Two of the boys who were entered for that raffle have gone to India in real ships, since; and one was shot, and died in the arms of his sister's lover, by whom he sent his last words home.

This is the library for the Minerva Press. If you want that kind of reading, come to our watering-place. The leaves of the romances, reduced to a condition very like curl-paper, are thickly studded with notes in pencil: sometimes complimentary, sometimes jocose. Some of these commentators, like commentators in a more extensive way, quarrel with one another. One young gentleman who sarcastically writes "Oh! ! !" after every sentimental passage, is pursued through his literary career by another, who writes "Insulting Beast!" Miss Julia Mills has read the whole collection of these books. She has left marginal notes on the pages, as "Is not this truly touching? J. M." "How thrilling! J. M." "Entranced here by the Magician's potent spell. J. M." She has also italicised her favourite traits in the description of the hero, as "his hair, which was *dark* and *wavy*, clustered in *rich profusion* around a *marble brow*, whose lofty paleness bespoke the intellect within." It reminds her of another hero. She adds, "How like B. L. Can this be mere coincidence? J. M."

You would hardly guess which is the main street of our watering-place, but you may know it by its being always stopped up with donkey-chaises. Whenever you come here, and see harnessed donkeys eating clover out of barrows drawn completely across a narrow thoroughfare, you may be quite sure you are in our High Street. Our Police you may know by his uniform, likewise by his never on any account interfering with anybody—especially the tramps and vagabonds. In our fancy shops we have a capital collection of damaged goods, among which the flies of countless summers "have been roaming." We are great in obsolete seals, and in faded pin-cushions, and in rickety camp-stools, and in exploded cutlery, and in miniature vessels, and in stunted little telescopes, and in objects made of shells that pretend not to be shells. Diminutive spades, barrows, and baskets, are our principal articles of commerce; but even they don't look quite new somehow. They always seem to have been offered and refused somewhere else, before they came down to our watering-place.

Yet it must not be supposed that our watering-place is an empty place, deserted by all visitors except a few staunch persons of approved fidelity. On the contrary, the chances are that if you come down here in August or September, you wouldn't find a house to lay your head in. As to finding either house or lodging of which you could reduce the terms, you could scarcely engage in a more hopeless pursuit. For all this, you are to observe that every season is the worst season ever known, and that the householding population of our watering-place are ruined regularly every autumn. They are like farmers, in regard that it is surprising how much ruin they will bear. We have an excellent hotel—capital baths, warm, cold, and shower—firstrate bathing-machines—and as good butchers, bakers, and grocers, as heart could desire. They all do business, it is to be presumed, from motives of philanthropy—but it is quite certain that they are all being ruined. Their interest in strangers, and their politeness under ruin, bespeak their amiable nature. You would say so, if you only saw the baker helping a new comer to find suitable apartments.

So far from being at a discount as to company, we are in fact what would be popularly called rather a nobby place. Some tip-top "Nobbs" come down occasionally—even Dukes and Duchesses. We have known such carriages to blaze among the donkey-chaises, as made beholders wink. Attendant on these equipages come resplendent creatures in plush and powder, who are sure to be stricken disgusted with the indifferent accommodation of our watering-place, and who, of an evening (particularly when it rains), may be seen very much out of drawing, in rooms far too small for their fine figures, looking discontentedly out of little back windows into bye-streets. The lords and ladies get on well enough and quite good-humouredly: but if you want to see the gorgeous phenomena who wait upon them at a perfect nonplus, you should come and look at the resplendent creatures with little back parlours for servants' halls, and turn-up bedsteads to sleep in, at our watering-place. You have no idea how they take it to heart.

We have a pier—a queer old wooden pier, fortunately without the slightest pretensions to architecture, and very picturesque in consequence. Boats are hauled up upon it, ropes are coiled all over it; lobster-pots, nets, masts, oars, spars, sails, ballast, and rickety capstans, make a perfect labyrinth of it. For ever hovering about this pier, with their hands in their pockets, or leaning over the rough bulwark it opposes to the sea, gazing through telescopes which they carry about in the same profound receptacles, are the Boatmen of our watering-place. Looking at them, you would say that surely these must be the laziest boatmen in the world. They lounge about, in obstinate and inflexible pantaloons that are apparently made of wood, the whole season through. Whether talking together about the shipping in the Channel, or gruffly unbending over mugs of beer at the public-house, you would consider them the slowest of men. The chances are a thousand to one that you might stay here for ten seasons, and never see a boatman in a hurry. A certain expression about his loose hands, when they are not in his pockets, as if he were carrying a considerable lump of iron in each, without any inconvenience, suggests strength, but he never seems to use it. He has the appearance of perpetually strolling—running is too inappropriate a word to be thought of—to seed. The only subject on which he seems to feel any approach to enthusiasm, is pitch. He pitches everything he can lay hold of,—the pier, the palings, his boat, his house,—when there is nothing else left he turns to and even pitches his hat, or his rough-weather clothing. Do not judge him by deceitful appearances. These are among the bravest and most skilful mariners that exist. Let a gale arise and swell into a storm, let a sea run that might appal the stoutest heart that ever beat, let the Light-boat on these dangerous sands throw up a rocket in the night, or let them hear through the angry roar the signal-guns of a ship in distress, and these men spring up into activity so dauntless, so valiant, and heroic, that the world cannot surpass it. Cavillers may object that they chiefly live upon the salvage of valuable cargoes. So they do, and God knows it is no great living that they get out of the deadly risks they run. But put that hope of gain aside. Let these rough fellows be asked, in any storm, who volunteers for the life-boat to save some perishing souls, as poor and empty-handed as themselves, whose lives the perfection of human reason does not rate at the value of a farthing each; and that boat will be manned, as surely and as cheerfully, as if a thousand pounds were told down on the weather-beaten pier. For this, and for the recollection of their comrades whom we have known, whom the raging sea has engulfed before their children's eyes in such brave efforts, whom the secret sand has buried, we hold the boatmen of our watering-place in our love and honour, and are tender of the fame they well deserve.

So many children are brought down to our watering-place that, when they are not out of doors, as they usually are in fine weather, it is wonderful where they are put: the whole village seeming much too small to hold them under cover. In the afternoons, you see no end of salt and sandy little boots drying on upper window-sills. At bathing-time in the morning, the little bay re-echoes with every shrill variety of shriek and splash—after which, if the weather be at all fresh, the sands teem with small blue mottled legs. The sands are the children's great resort. They cluster there, like ants: so busy burying their particular friends, and making castles with infinite labour which the next tide overthrows, that it is curious to consider how their play, to the music of the sea, foreshadows the realities of their after lives.

It is curious, too, to observe a natural ease of approach that there seems to be between the children and the boatmen. They mutually make acquaintance, and take individual likings, without any help. You will come upon one of those slow heavy fellows sitting down patiently mending a little ship for a mite of a boy, whom he could crush to death by throwing his lightest pair of trousers on him. You will be sensible of the oddest contrast between the smooth little creature, and the rough man who seems to be carved out of hard-grained wood—between the delicate hand expectantly held out, and the immense thumb and finger that can hardly feel the rigging of thread they mend—between the small voice and the gruff growl—and yet there is a natural propriety in the companionship: always to be noted in confidence between a child and a person who has any merit of reality and genuineness: which is admirably pleasant.

We have a preventive station at our watering-place, and much the same thing may be observed—in a lesser degree, because of their official character—of the coast blockade; a steady, trusty, well-conditioned, well-conducted set of men, with no misgiving about looking you full in the face, and with a quiet thorough-going way of passing along to their duty at night, carrying huge sou'-wester clothing in reserve, that is fraught with all good prepossession. They are handy fellows—neat about their houses—industrious at gardening—would get on with their wives, one thinks, in a desert island—and people it, too, soon.

As to the naval officer of the station, with his hearty fresh face, and his blue eye that has pierced all kinds of weather, it warms our hearts when he comes into church on a Sunday, with that bright mixture of blue coat, buff waistcoat, black neckerchief, and gold epaulette, that is associated in the minds of all Englishmen with brave, unpretending, cordial, national service. We like to look at him in his Sunday state; and if we were First Lord (really possessing the indispensable qualification for the office of knowing nothing whatever about the sea), we would give him a ship to-morrow.

We have a church, by-the-by, of course—a hideous temple of flint, like a great petrified haystack. Our chief clerical dignitary, who, to his honour, has done much for education both in time and money, and has established excellent schools, is a sound, shrewd, healthy gentleman, who has got into little occasional difficulties with the neighbouring farmers, but has had a pestilent trick of being right. Under a new regulation, he has yielded the church of our watering-place to another clergyman. Upon the whole we get on in church well. We are a little bilious sometimes, about these days of fraternisation, and about nations arriving at a new and more unprejudiced knowledge of each other (which our Christianity don't quite approve), but it soon goes off, and then we get on very well.

There are two dissenting chapels, besides, in our small watering-place; being in about the proportion of a hundred and twenty guns to a yacht. But the dissension that has torn us lately, has not been a religious one. It has arisen on the novel question of Gas. Our watering-place has been convulsed by the agitation, Gas or No Gas. It was never reasoned why No Gas, but there was a great No Gas party. Broadsides were printed and stuck about—a startling circumstance in our watering-place. The No Gas party rested content with chalking "No Gas!" and "Down with Gas!" and other such angry war-whoops, on the few back gates and scraps of wall which the limits of our watering-place afford; but the Gas party printed and posted bills, wherein they took the high ground of proclaiming against the No Gas party, that it was said Let there be light and there was light; and that not to have light (that is gas-light) in our watering-place, was to contravene the great decree. Whether by these thunderbolts or not, the No Gas party were defeated, and in this present season we have had our handful of shops illuminated for the first time. Such of the No Gas party, however, as have got shops, remain in opposition and burn tallow—exhibiting in their windows the very picture of the sulkiness that punishes itself, and a new illustration of the old adage about cutting off your nose to be revenged on your face, in cutting off their gas to be revenged on their business.

Other population than we have indicated, our watering-place has none. There are a few old used-up boatmen who creep about in the sunlight with the help of sticks, and there is a poor imbecile shoemaker who wanders his lonely life away among the rocks, as if he were looking for his reason—which he will never find. Sojourners in neighbouring watering-places come occasionally in flys to stare at us, and drive away again as if they thought us very dull; Italian boys come, Punch comes, the Fantoccini come, the Tumblers come, the Ethiopians come; Glee-singers come at night, and hum and vibrate (not always melodiously) under our windows. But they all go soon, and leave us to ourselves again. We once had a travelling Circus and Wombwell's Menagerie at the same time. They both know better than ever to try it again; and the Menagerie had nearly razed us from the face of the earth in getting the elephant away—his caravan was so large, and the watering-place so small. We have a fine sea, wholesome for all people; profitable for the body, profitable for the mind. The poet's words are sometimes on its awful lips:

And the stately ships go on
   To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
   And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
   At the foot of thy crags, O sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
   Will never come back to me.

Yet it is not always so, for the speech of the sea is various, and wants not abundant resource of cheerfulness, hope, and lusty encouragement. And since I have been idling at the window here, the tide has risen. The boats are dancing on the bubbling water; the colliers are afloat again; the white-bordered waves rush in; the children

Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him
When he comes back;

the radiant sails are gliding past the shore, and shining on the far horizon; all the sea is sparkling, heaving, swelling up with life and beauty, this bright morning.

OUR FRENCH WATERING-PLACE

Having earned by many years of fidelity, the right to be sometimes inconstant to our English watering-place, we have dallied for two or three seasons with a French watering-place: once solely known to us as a town with a very long street, beginning with an abattoir and ending with a steam-boat, which it seemed our fate to behold only at daybreak on winter mornings, when (in the days before continental railroads), just sufficiently awake to know that we were most uncomfortably asleep, it was our destiny always to clatter through it, in the coupé of the diligence from Paris, with a sea of mud behind us, and a sea of tumbling waves before. In relation to which latter monster, our mind's eye now recalls a worthy Frenchman in a seal-skin cap with a braided hood over it, once our travelling companion in the coupé aforesaid who, waking up with a pale and crumpled visage, and looking ruefully out at the grim row of breakers enjoying themselves fanatically on an instrument of torture called "the Bar," inquired of us whether we were ever sick at sea? Both to prepare his mind for the abject creature we were presently to become, and also to afford him consolation, we replied, "Sir, your servant is always sick when it is possible to be so." He returned, altogether uncheered by the bright example, "Ah, Heaven, but I am always sick, even when it is *im*possible to be so."

The means of communication between the French capital and our French watering-place are wholly changed since those days; but the Channel remains unbridged as yet, and the old floundering and knocking about go on there. It must be confessed that saving in reasonable (and therefore rare) sea-weather, the act of arrival at our French watering-place from England is difficult to be achieved with dignity. Several little circumstances combine to render the visitor an object of humiliation. In the first place, the steamer no sooner touches the port, than all the passengers fall into captivity: being boarded by an overpowering force of Custom-house officers, and marched into a gloomy dungeon. In the second place, the road to this dungeon is fenced off with ropes breast-high, and outside those ropes all the English in the place who have lately been sea-sick and are now well, assemble in their best clothes to enjoy the degradation of their dilapidated fellow-creatures. "Oh, my gracious! how ill this one has been!" "Here's a damp one coming next!" "*Here's* a pale one!" "Oh! Ain't he green in the face, this next one!" Even we ourself (not deficient in natural dignity) have a lively remembrance of staggering up this detested lane one September day in a gale of wind, when we were received like an irresistible comic actor, with a burst of laughter and applause, occasioned by the extreme imbecility of our legs.

We were coming to the third place. In the third place, the captives, being shut up in the gloomy dungeon, are strained, two or three at a time, into an inner cell, to be examined as to passports; and across the doorway of communication, stands a military creature making a bar of his arm. Two ideas are generally present to the British mind during these ceremonies; first, that it is necessary to make for the cell with violent struggles, as if it were a life-boat and the dungeon a ship going down; secondly, that the military creature's arm is a national affront, which the government at home ought instantly to "take up." The British mind and body becoming heated by these fantasies, delirious answers are made to inquiries, and extravagant actions performed. Thus, Johnson persists in giving Johnson as his baptismal name, and substituting for his ancestral designation the national "Dam!" Neither can he by any means be brought to recognise the distinction between a portmanteau-key and a passport, but will obstinately persevere in tendering the one when asked for the other. This brings him to the fourth place, in a state of mere idiotcy; and when he is, in the fourth place, cast out at a little door into a howling wilderness of touters, he becomes a lunatic with wild eyes and floating hair until rescued and soothed. If friendless and unrescued, he is generally put into a railway omnibus and taken to Paris.

But our French watering-place, when it is once got into, is a very enjoyable place. It has a varied and beautiful country around it, and many characteristic and agreeable things within it. To be sure, it might have fewer bad smells and less decaying refuse, and it might be better drained, and much cleaner in many parts, and therefore infinitely more healthy. Still, it is a bright, airy, pleasant, cheerful town; and if you were to walk down either of its three well-paved main streets, towards five o'clock in the afternoon, when delicate odours of cookery fill the air, and its hotel windows (it is full of hotels) give glimpses of long tables set out for dinner, and made to look sumptuous by the aid of napkins folded fan-wise, you would rightly judge it to be an uncommonly good town to eat and drink in.

We have an old walled town, rich in cool public wells of water, on the top of a hill within and above the present business-town; and if it were some hundreds of miles further from England, instead of being, on a clear day, within sight of the grass growing in the crevices of the chalk-cliffs of Dover, you would long ago have been bored to death about that town. It is more picturesque and quaint than half the innocent places which tourists, following their leader like sheep, have made impostors of. To say nothing of its houses with grave courtyards, its queer by-corners, and its many-windowed streets white and quiet in the sunlight, there is an ancient belfry in it that would have been in all the Annuals and Albums, going and gone, these hundred years, if it had but been more expensive to get at. Happily it has escaped so well, being only in our French watering-place, that you may like it of your own accord in a natural manner, without being required to go into convulsions about it. We regard it as one of the later blessings of our life, that BILKINS, the only authority on Taste, never took any notice that we can find out, of our French watering-place. Bilkins never wrote about it, never pointed out anything to be seen in it, never measured anything in it, always left it alone. For which relief, Heaven bless the town and the memory of the immortal Bilkins likewise!

There is a charming walk, arched and shaded by trees, on the old walls that form the four sides of this High Town, whence you get glimpses of the streets below, and changing views of the other town and of the river, and of the hills and of the sea. It is made more agreeable and peculiar by some of the solemn houses that are rooted in the deep streets below, bursting into a fresher existence a-top, and having doors and windows, and even gardens, on these ramparts. A child going in at the courtyard gate of one of these houses, climbing up the many stairs, and coming out at the fourth-floor window, might conceive himself another Jack, alighting on enchanted ground from another bean-stalk. It is a place wonderfully populous in children; English children, with governesses reading novels as they walk down the shady lanes of trees, or nursemaids interchanging gossip on the seats; French children with their smiling bonnes in snow-white caps, and themselves—if little boys—in straw headgear like beehives, work-baskets and church hassocks. Three years ago, there were three weazen old men, one bearing a frayed red ribbon in his threadbare button-hole, always to be found walking together among these children, before dinner-time. If they walked for an appetite, they doubtless lived en pension—were contracted for—otherwise their poverty would have made it a rash action. They were stooping, blear-eyed, dull old men, slip-shod and shabby, in long-skirted short-waisted coats and meagre trousers, and yet with a ghost of gentility hovering in their company. They spoke little to each other, and looked as if they might have been politically discontented if they had had vitality enough. Once, we overheard red-ribbon feebly complain to the other two that somebody, or something, was a "Robber"; and then they all three set their mouths so that they would have ground their teeth if they had had any. The ensuing winter gathered red-ribbon unto the great company of faded ribbons, and next year the remaining two were there—getting themselves entangled with hoops and dolls—familiar mysteries to the children—probably in the eyes of most of them, harmless creatures who had never been like children, and whom children could never be like. Another winter came, and another old man went, and so, this present year, the last of the triumvirate left off walking—it was no good, now—and sat by himself on a little solitary bench, with the hoops and the dolls as lively as ever all about him.

In the Place d'Armes of this town, a little decayed market is held, which seems to slip through the old gateway, like water, and go rippling down the hill, to mingle with the murmuring market in the lower town, and get lost in its movement and bustle. It is very agreeable on an idle summer morning to pursue this market-stream from the hill-top. It begins, dozingly and dully, with a few sacks of corn; starts into a surprising collection of boots and shoes; goes brawling down the hill in a diversified channel of old cordage, old iron, old crockery, old clothes, civil and military, old rags, new cotton goods, flaming prints of saints, little looking-glasses and incalculable lengths of tape; dives into a backway, keeping out of sight for a little while, as streams will, or only sparkling for a moment in the shape of a market drinking-shop; and suddenly reappears behind the great church, shooting itself into a bright confusion of white-capped women and blue-bloused men, poultry, vegetables, fruits, flowers, pots, pans, praying-chairs, soldiers, country butter, umbrellas and other sun-shades, girl-porters waiting to be hired with baskets at their backs, and one weazen little old man in a cocked hat, wearing a cuirass of drinking-glasses and carrying on his shoulder a crimson temple fluttering with flags, like a glorified pavior's rammer without the handle, who rings a little bell in all parts of the scene, and cries his cooling drink Hola, Hola, Ho-o-o! in a shrill cracked voice that somehow makes itself heard, above all the chaffering and vending hum. Early in the afternoon, the whole course of the stream is dry. The praying-chairs are put back in the church, the umbrellas are folded up, the unsold goods are carried away, the stalls and stands disappear, the square is swept, the hackney coaches lounge there to be hired, and on all the country roads(if you walk about, as much as we do) you will see the peasant women, always neatly and comfortably dressed, riding home, with the pleasantest saddle-furniture of clean milk-pails, bright butter-kegs, and the like, on the jolliest little donkeys in the world.

We have another market in our French watering-place—that is to say, a few wooden hutches in the open street, down by the Port—devoted to fish. Our fishing-boats are famous everywhere; and our fishing people, though they love lively colours and taste is neutral (see Bilkins), are among the most picturesque people we ever encountered. They have not only a quarter of their own in the town itself, but they occupy whole villages of their own on the neighbouring cliffs. Their churches and chapels are their own; they consort with one another, they intermarry among themselves, their customs are their own, and their costume is their own and never changes. As soon as one of their boys can walk, he is provided with a long bright red nightcap; and one of their men would as soon think of going afloat without his head, as without that indispensable appendage to it. Then, they wear the noblest boots, with the hugest tops—flapping and bulging over anyhow; above which, they encase themselves in such wonderful overalls and petticoat trousers, made to all appearance of tarry old sails, so additionally stiffened with pitch and salt, that the wearers have a walk of their own, and go straddling and swinging about among the boats and barrels and nets and rigging, a sight to see. Then, their younger women, by dint of going down to the sea barefoot, to fling their baskets into the boats as they come in with the tide, and bespeak the first fruits of the haul with propitiatory promises to love and marry that dear fisherman who shall fill that basket like an Angel, have the finest legs ever carved by Nature in the brightest mahogany, and they walk like Juno. Their eyes, too, are so lustrous that their long gold ear-rings turn dull beside those brilliant neighbours; and when they are dressed, what with these beauties, and their fine fresh faces, and their many petticoats—striped petticoats, red petticoats, blue petticoats, always clean and smart, and never too long—and their home-made stockings, mulberry-coloured, blue, brown, purple, lilac—which the older women, taking care of the Dutch-looking children, sit in all sorts of places knitting, knitting, knitting from morning to night—and what with their little saucy bright blue jackets, knitted too, and fitting close to their handsome figures; and what with the natural grace with which they wear the commonest cap, or fold the commonest handkerchief round their luxuriant hair—we say, in a word and out of breath, that taking all these premises into our consideration, it has never been a matter of the least surprise to us that we have never once met, in the cornfields, on the dusty roads, by the breezy windmills, on the plots of short sweet grass overhanging the sea—anywhere—a young fisherman and fisherwoman of our French watering-place together, but the arm of that fisherman has invariably been, as a matter of course and without any absurd attempt to disguise so plain a necessity, round the neck or waist of that fisherwoman. And we have had no doubt whatever, standing looking up at their uphill streets, house rising above house, and terrace above terrace, and bright garments here and there lying sunning on rough stone parapets, that the pleasant mist on all such objects, caused by their being seen through the brown nets hung across on poles to dry, is, in the eyes of every true young fisherman, a mist of love and beauty, setting off the goddess of his heart.

Moreover it is to be observed that these are an industrious people, and a domestic people, and an honest people. And though we are aware that at the bidding of Bilkins it is our duty to fall down and worship the Neapolitans, we make bold very much to prefer the fishing people of our French watering-place—especially since our last visit to Naples within these twelve months, when we found only four conditions of men remaining in the whole city: to wit, lazzaroni, priests, spies, and soldiers, and all of them beggars; the paternal government having banished all its subjects except the rascals.

But we can never henceforth separate our French watering-place from our own landlord of two summers, M. Loyal Devasseur, citizen and town-councillor. Permit us to have the pleasure of presenting M. Loyal Devasseur.

His own family name is simply Loyal; but as he is married, and as in that part of France a husband always adds to his own name the family name of his wife, he writes himself Loyal Devasseur. He owns a compact little estate of some twenty or thirty acres on a lofty hill-side, and on it he has built two country houses, which he lets furnished. They are by many degrees the best houses that are so let near our French watering-place; we have had the honour of living in both, and can testify. The entrance-hall of the first we inhabited was ornamented with a plan of the estate, representing it as about twice the size of Ireland; insomuch that when we were yet new to the property (M. Loyal always speaks of it as "La propriété") we went three miles straight on end in search of the bridge of Austerlitz—which we afterwards found to be immediately outside the window. The Château of the Old Guard, in another part of the grounds, and, according to the plan, about two leagues from the little dining-room, we sought in vain for a week, until, happening one evening to sit upon a bench in the forest (forest in the plan), a few yards from the house-door, we observed at our feet, in the ignominious circumstances of being upside down and greenly rotten, the Old Guard himself: that is to say, the painted effigy of a member of that distinguished corps, seven feet high, and in the act of carrying arms, who had had the misfortune to be blown down in the previous winter. It will be perceived that M. Loyal is a staunch admirer of the great Napoleon. He is an old soldier himself—captain of the National Guard, with a handsome gold vase on his chimney-piece, presented to him by his company—and his respect for the memory of the illustrious general is enthusiastic. Medallions of him, portraits of him, busts of him, pictures of him, are thickly sprinkled all over the property. During the first month of our occupation, it was our affliction to be constantly knocking down Napoleon: if we touched a shelf in a dark corner, he toppled over with a crash; and every door we opened, shook him to the soul. Yet M. Loyal is not a man of mere castles in the air, or, as he would say, in Spain. He has a specially practical, contriving, clever, skilful eye and hand. His houses are delightful. He unites French elegance and English comfort, in a happy manner quite his own. He has an extraordinary genius for making tasteful little bedrooms in angles of his roofs, which an Englishman would as soon think of turning to any account as he would think of cultivating the Desert. We have ourself reposed deliciously in an elegant chamber of M. Loyal's construction, with our head as nearly in the kitchen chimney-pot as we can conceive it likely for the head of any gentleman, not by profession a Sweep, to be. And into whatsoever strange nook M. Loyal's genius penetrates, it, in that nook, infallibly constructs a cupboard and a row of pegs. In either of our houses, we could have put away the knapsacks and hung up the hats of the whole regiment of Guides.

Aforetime, M. Loyal was a tradesman in the town. You can transact business with no present tradesman in the town, and give your card "chez M. Loyal," but a brighter face shines upon you directly. We doubt if there is, ever was, or ever will be, a man so universally pleasant in the minds of people as M. Loyal is in the minds of the citizens of our French watering-place. They rub their hands and laugh when they speak of him. Ah, but he is such a good child, such a brave boy, such a generous spirit, that Monsieur Loyal! It is the honest truth. M. Loyal's nature is the nature of a gentleman. He cultivates his ground with his own hands (assisted by one little labourer, who falls into a fit now and then); and he digs and delves from morn to eve in prodigious perspirations—"works always," as he says—but, cover him with dust, mud, weeds, water, any stains you will, you never can cover the gentleman in M. Loyal. A portly, upright, broad-shouldered, brown-faced man, whose soldierly bearing gives him the appearance of being taller than he is, look into the bright eye of M. Loyal, standing before you in his working-blouse and cap, not particularly well shaved, and, it may be, very earthy, and you shall discern in M. Loyal a gentleman whose true politeness is in grain, and confirmation of whose word by his bond you would blush to think of. Not without reason is M. Loyal when he tells that story, in his own vivacious way, of his travelling to Fulham, near London, to buy all these hundreds and hundreds of trees you now see upon the Property, then a bare, bleak hill; and of his sojourning in Fulham three months; and of his jovial evenings with the market-gardeners; and of the crowning banquet before his departure, when the market-gardeners rose as one man, clinked their glasses all together (as the custom at Fulham is), and cried, "Vive Loyal!"

M. Loyal has an agreeable wife, but no family; and he loves to drill the children of his tenants, or run races with them, or do anything with them, or for them, that is good-natured. He is of a highly convivial temperament, and his hospitality is unbounded. Billet a soldier on him, and he is delighted. Five-and-thirty soldiers had M. Loyal billeted on him this present summer, and they all got fat and red-faced in two days. It became a legend among the troops that whosoever got billeted on M. Loyal rolled in clover; and so it fell out that the fortunate man who drew the billet "M. Loyal Devasseur" always leaped into the air, though in heavy marching order. M. Loyal cannot bear to admit anything that might seem by any implication to disparage the military profession. We hinted to him once, that we were conscious of a remote doubt arising in our mind, whether a sou a day for pocket-money, tobacco, stockings, drink, washing, and social pleasures in general, left a very large margin for a soldier's enjoyment. Pardon! said Monsieur Loyal, rather wincing. It was not a fortune, but—à la bonne heure—it was better than it used to be! What, we asked him on another occasion, were all those neighbouring peasants, each living with his family in one room, and each having a soldier (perhaps two) billeted on him every other night, required to provide for those soldiers? "Faith!" said M. Loyal, reluctantly; "a bed, monsieur, and fire to cook with, and a candle. And they share their supper with those soldiers. It is not possible that they could eat alone."—"And what allowance do they get for this?" said we. Monsieur Loyal drew himself up taller, took a step back, laid his hand upon his breast, and said, with majesty, as speaking for himself and all France, "Monsieur, it is a contribution to the State!"

It is never going to rain, according to M. Loyal. When it is impossible to deny that it is now raining in torrents, he says it will be fine—charming—magnificent—to-morrow. It is never hot on the Property, he contends. Likewise it is never cold. The flowers, he says, come out, delighting to grow there; it is like Paradise this morning; it is like the Garden of Eden. He is a little fanciful in his language: smilingly observing of Madame Loyal, when she is absent at vespers, that she is "gone to her salvation"—allée à son salut. He has a great enjoyment of tobacco, but nothing would induce him to continue smoking face to face with a lady. His short black pipe immediately goes into his breast pocket, scorches his blouse, and nearly sets him on fire. In the Town Council and on occasions of ceremony, he appears in a full suit of black, with a waistcoat of magnificent breadth across the chest, and a shirt-collar of fabulous proportions. Good M. Loyal! Under blouse or waistcoat, he carries one of the gentlest hearts that beat in a nation teeming with gentle people. He has had losses, and has been at his best under them. Not only the loss of his way by night in the Fulham times—when a bad subject of an Englishman, under pretence of seeing him home, took him into all the night public-houses, drank "arfanarf" in every one at his expense, and finally fled, leaving him shipwrecked at Cleefeeway, which we apprehend to be Ratcliffe Highway—but heavier losses than that. Long ago a family of children and a mother were left in one of his houses without money, a whole year. M. Loyal—anything but as rich as we wish he had been—had not the heart to say "you must go"; so they stayed on and stayed on, and paying-tenants who would have come in couldn't come in, and at last they managed to get helped home across the water; and M. Loyal kissed the whole group, and said, "Adieu, my poor infants!" and sat down in their deserted salon and smoked his pipe of peace—"The rent, M. Loyal?" "Eh! well! The rent!" M. Loyal shakes his head. "Le bon Dieu," says M. Loyal presently, "will recompense me," and he laughs and smokes his pipe of peace. May he smoke it on the Property, and not be recompensed, these fifty years!

There are public amusements in our French watering-place, or it would not be French. They are very popular, and very cheap. The sea-bathing—which may rank as the most favoured daylight entertainment, inasmuch as the French visitors bathe all day long, and seldom appear to think of remaining less than an hour at a time in the water—is astoundingly cheap. Omnibuses convey you, if you please, from a convenient part of the town to the beach and back again; you have a clean and comfortable bathing-machine, dress, linen, and all appliances; and the charge for the whole is half-a-franc, or fivepence. On the pier, there is usually a guitar which seems presumptuously enough to set its tinkling against the deep hoarseness of the sea, and there is always some boy or woman who sings, without any voice, little songs without any tune: the strain we have most frequently heard being an appeal to "the sportsman" not to bag that choicest of game, the swallow. For bathing purposes, we have also a subscription establishment with an esplanade, where people lounge about with telescopes, and seem to get a good deal of weariness for their money; and we have also an association of individual machine proprietors combined against this formidable rival. M. Féroce, our own particular friend in the bathing line, is one of these. How he ever came by his name we cannot imagine. He is as gentle and polite a man as M. Loyal Devasseur himself; immensely stout withal, and of a beaming aspect. M. Féroce has saved so many people from drowning, and has been decorated with so many medals in consequence, that his stoutness seems a special dispensation of Providence to enable him to wear them; if his girth were the girth of an ordinary man, he could never hang them on, all at once. It is only on very great occasions that M. Féroce displays his shining honours. At other times they lie by, with rolls of manuscript testifying to the causes of their presentation, in a huge glass case in the red-sofa'd salon of his private residence on the beach, where M. Féroce also keeps his family pictures, his portraits of himself as he appears both in bathing life and in private life, his little boats that rock by clockwork, and his other ornamental possessions.

Then, we have a commodious and gay Theatre—or had, for it is burned down now—where the opera was always preceded by a vaudeville, in which (as usual) everybody, down to the little old man with the large hat and the little cane and tassel, who always played either my Uncle or my Papa, suddenly broke out of the dialogue into the mildest vocal snatches, to the great perplexity of unaccustomed strangers from Great Britain, who never could make out when they were singing and when they were talking—and indeed it was pretty much the same. But the caterers in the way of entertainment to whom we are most beholden are the Society of Welldoing, who are active all the summer, and give the proceeds of their good works to the poor. Some of the most agreeable fêtes they contrive are announced as "Dedicated to the children"; and the taste with which they turn a small public enclosure into an elegant garden beautifully illuminated, and the thorough-going heartiness and energy with which they personally direct the childish pleasures, are supremely delightful. For fivepence a head, we have on these occasions donkey races with English "Jokeis," and other rustic sports; lotteries for toys, roundabouts, dancing on the grass to the music of an admirable band, fire-balloons and fireworks. Further, almost every week all through the summer—never mind, now, on what day of the week—there is a fête in some adjoining village (called in that part of the country a Ducasse), where the people—really *the people*—dance on the green turf in the open air, round a little orchestra, that seems itself to dance, there is such an airy motion of flags and streamers all about it. And we do not suppose that between the Torrid Zone and the North Pole there are to be found male dancers with such astonishingly loose legs, furnished with so many joints in wrong places, utterly unknown to Professor Owen, as those who here disport themselves. Sometimes the fête appertains to a particular trade; you will see among the cheerful young women at the joint Ducasse of the milliners and tailors, a wholesome knowledge of the art of making common and cheap things uncommon and pretty, by good sense and good taste, that is a practical lesson to any rank of society in a whole island we could mention. The oddest feature of these agreeable scenes is the everlasting Roundabout (we preserve an English word wherever we can, as we are writing the English language), on the wooden horses of which machine grown-up people of all ages are wound round and round with the utmost solemnity, while the proprietor's wife grinds an organ, capable of only one tune, in the centre.

As to the boarding-houses of our French watering-place, they are Legion, and would require a distinct treatise. It is not without a sentiment of national pride that we believe them to contain more bores from the shores of Albion than all the clubs in London. As you walk timidly in their neighbourhood, the very neckcloths and hats of your elderly compatriots cry to you from the stones of the streets, "We are Bores—avoid us!" We have never overheard at street corners such lunatic scraps of political and social discussion as among these dear countrymen of ours. They believe everything that is impossible and nothing that is true.They carry rumours, and ask questions, and make corrections and improvements on one another, staggering to the human intellect. And they are for ever rushing into the English library, propounding such incomprehensible paradoxes to the fair mistress of that establishment, that we beg to recommend her to her Majesty's gracious consideration as a fit object for a pension.

The English form a considerable part of the population of our French watering-place, and are deservedly addressed and respected in many ways. Some of the surface-addresses to them are odd enough, and when a laundress puts a placard outside her house announcing her possession of that curious British instrument, a "Mingle"; or when a tavern-keeper provides accommodation for the celebrated English game of "Nokemdon." But, to us, it is not the least pleasant feature of our French watering-place that a long and constant fusion of the two great nations there has taught each to like the other, and to learn from the other, and to rise superior to the absurd prejudices that have lingered among the weak and ignorant in both countries equally.

Drumming and trumpeting of course go on for ever in our French watering-place. Flag-flying is at a premium, too; but we cheerfully avow that we consider a flag a very pretty object, and that we take such outward signs of innocent liveliness to our heart of hearts. The people, in the town and in the country, are a busy people who work hard; they are sober, temperate, good-humoured, light-hearted, and generally remarkable for their engaging manners. Few just men, not immoderately bilious, could see them in their recreations without very much respecting the character that is so easily, so harmlessly, and so simply, pleased.

"BIRTHS. MRS. MEEK, OF A SON"

My name is Meek. I am, in fact, Mr. Meek. That son is mine and Mrs. Meek's. When I saw the announcement in the *Times*, I dropped the paper. I had put it in, myself, and paid for it, but it looked so noble that it overpowered me.

As soon as I could compose my feelings, I took the paper up to Mrs. Meek's bedside. "Maria Jane," said I (I allude to Mrs. Meek), "you are now a public character." We read the review of our child, several times, with feelings of the strongest emotion; and I sent the boy who cleans the boots and shoes to the office for fifteen copies. No reduction was made on taking that quantity.

It is scarcely necessary for me to say, that our child had been expected. In fact, it had been expected, with comparative confidence, for some months. Mrs. Meek's mother, who resides with us—of the name of Bigby—had made every preparation for its admission to our circle.

I hope and believe I am a quiet man. I will go farther. I *know* I am a quiet man. My constitution is tremulous, my voice was never loud, and, in point of stature, I have been from infancy, small. I have the greatest respect for Maria Jane's Mama. She is a most remarkable woman. I honour Maria Jane's Mama. In my opinion she would storm a town, single-handed, with a hearth-broom, and carry it. I have never known her to yield any point whatever to mortal man. She is calculated to terrify the stoutest heart.

Still—but I will not anticipate.

The first intimation I had of any preparations being in progress, on the part of Maria Jane's Mama, was one afternoon, several months ago. I came home earlier than usual from the office, and, proceeding into the dining-room, found an obstruction behind the door, which prevented it from opening freely. It was an obstruction of a soft nature. On looking in, I found it to be a female.

The female in question stood in the corner behind the door, consuming Sherry Wine. From the nutty smell of that beverage pervading the apartment, I have no doubt she was consuming a second glassful. She wore a black bonnet of large dimensions, and was copious in figure. The expression of her countenance was severe and discontented. The words to which she gave utterance on seeing me, were these, "Oh git along with you, Sir, if *you* please; me and Mrs. Bigby don't want no male parties here!"

That female was Mrs. Prodgit.

I immediately withdrew, of course. I was rather hurt, but I made no remark. Whether it was that I showed a lowness of spirits after dinner, in consequence of feeling that I seemed to intrude, I cannot say. But Maria Jane's Mama said to me on her retiring for the night: in a low distinct voice, and with a look of reproach that completely subdued me: "George Meek, Mrs. Prodgit is your wife's nurse!"

I bear no ill-will towards Mrs. Prodgit. Is it likely that I, writing this with tears in my eyes, should be capable of deliberate animosity towards a female, so essential to the welfare of Maria Jane? I am willing to admit that Fate may have been to blame, and not Mrs. Prodgit; but it is undeniably true, that the latter female brought desolation and devastation into my lowly dwelling.

We were happy after her first appearance; we were sometimes exceedingly so. But whenever the parlour door was opened, and "Mrs. Prodgit!" announced (and she was very often announced), misery ensued. I could not bear Mrs. Prodgit's look. I felt that I was far from wanted, and had no business to exist in Mrs. Prodgit's presence. Between Maria Jane's Mama and Mrs. Prodgit, there was a dreadful, secret, understanding—a dark mystery and conspiracy, pointing me out as a being to be shunned. I appeared to have done something that was evil. Whenever Mrs. Prodgit called after dinner, I retired to my dressing-room—where the temperature is very low, indeed, in the wintry time of the year—and sat looking at my frosty breath as it rose before me, and at my rack of boots; a serviceable article of furniture, but never, in my opinion, an exhilarating object. The length of the councils that were held with Mrs. Prodgit, under these circumstances, I will not attempt to describe. I will merely remark, that Mrs. Prodgit always consumed Sherry Wine while the deliberations were in progress; that they always ended in Maria Jane's being in wretched spirits on the sofa; and that Maria Jane's Mama always received me, when I was recalled, with a look of desolate triumph that too plainly said, "*Now*, George Meek! You see my child, Maria Jane, a ruin, and I hope you are satisfied!"

I pass, generally, over the period that intervened between the day when Mrs. Prodgit entered her protest against male parties, and the ever-memorable midnight when I brought her to my unobtrusive home in a cab, with an extremely large box on the roof, and a bundle, a bandbox, and a basket, between the driver's legs. I have no objection to Mrs. Prodgit (aided and abetted by Mrs. Bigby, who I never can forget is the parent of Maria Jane) taking entire possession of my unassuming establishment. In the recesses of my own breast, the thought may linger that a man in possession cannot be so dreadful as a woman, and that woman Mrs. Prodgit; but I ought to bear a good deal, and I hope I can, and do. Huffing and snubbing prey upon my feelings; but I can bear them without complaint. They may tell in the long run; I may be hustled about, from post to pillar, beyond my strength; nevertheless, I wish to avoid giving rise to words in the family.

The voice of Nature, however, cries aloud in behalf of Augustus George, my infant son. It is for him that I wish to utter a few plaintive household words. I am not at all angry; I am mild—but miserable.

I wish to know why, when my child, Augustus George, was expected in our circle, a provision of pins was made, as if the little stranger were a criminal who was to be put to the torture immediately on his arrival, instead of a holy babe? I wish to know why haste was made to stick those pins all over his innocent form, in every direction? I wish to be informed why light and air are excluded from Augustus George, like poisons? Why, I ask, is my unoffending infant so hedged into a basket-bedstead, with dimity and calico, with miniature sheets and blankets, that I can only hear him snuffle (and no wonder!) deep down under the pink hood of a little bathing-machine, and can never peruse even so much of his lineaments as his nose.

Was I expected to be the father of a French Roll, that the brushes of All Nations were laid in, to rasp Augustus George? Am I to be told that his sensitive skin was ever intended by Nature to have rashes brought out upon it, by the premature and incessant use of those formidable little instruments?

Is my son a Nutmeg, that he is to be grated on the stiff edges of sharp frills? Am I the parent of a Muslin boy, that his yielding surface is to be crimped and small plaited? Or is my child composed of Paper or of Linen, that impressions of the finer getting-up art, practised by the laundress, are to be printed off, all over his soft arms and legs, as I constantly observe them? The starch enters his soul; who can wonder that he cries?

Was Augustus George intended to have limbs, or to be born a Torso? I presume that limbs were the intention, as they are the usual practice. Then, why are my poor child's limbs fettered and tied up? Am I to be told that there is any analogy between Augustus George Meek and Jack Sheppard?

Analyse Castor Oil at any Institution of Chemistry that may be agreed upon, and inform me what resemblance, in taste, it bears to that natural provision which it is at once the pride and duty of Maria Jane to administer to Augustus George! Yet, I charge Mrs. Prodgit (aided and abetted by Mrs. Bigby) with systematically forcing Castor Oil on my innocent son, from the first hour of his birth. When that medicine, in its efficient action, causes internal disturbance to Augustus George, I charge Mrs. Prodgit (aided and abetted by Mrs. Bigby) with insanely and inconsistently administering opium to allay the storm she has raised! What is the meaning of this?

If the days of Egyptian Mummies are past, how dare Mrs. Prodgit require, for the use of my son, an amount of flannel and linen that would carpet my humble roof? Do I wonder that she requires it? No! This morning, within an hour, I beheld this agonising sight. I beheld my son—Augustus George—in Mrs. Prodgit's hands, and on Mrs. Prodgit's knee, being dressed. He was at the moment, comparatively speaking, in a state of nature; having nothing on but an extremely short shirt, remarkably disproportionate to the length of his usual outer garments. Trailing from Mrs. Prodgit's lap, on the floor, was a long narrow roller or bandage—I should say of several yards in extent. In this, I SAW Mrs. Prodgit tightly roll the body of my unoffending infant, turning him over and over, now presenting his unconscious face upwards, now the back of his bald head, until the unnatural feat was accomplished, and the bandage secured by a pin, which I have every reason to believe entered the body of my only child. In this tourniquet, he passes the present phase of his existence. Can I know it, and smile!

I fear I have been betrayed into expressing myself warmly, but I feel deeply. Not for myself; for Augustus George. I dare not interfere. Will any one? Will any publication? Any doctor? Any parent? Any body? I do not complain that Mrs. Prodgit (aided and abetted by Mrs. Bigby) entirely alienates Maria Jane's affections from me, and interposes an impassable barrier between us. I do not complain of being made of no account. I do not want to be of any account. But Augustus George is a production of Nature (I cannot think otherwise), and I claim that he should be treated with some remote reference to Nature. In my opinion, Mrs. Prodgit is, from first to last, a convention and a superstition. Are all the faculty afraid of Mrs. Prodgit? If not, why don't they take her in hand and improve her?

P.S. Maria Jane's Mama boasts of her own knowledge of the subject, and says she brought up seven children besides Maria Jane. But how do *I* know that she might not have brought them up much better? Maria Jane herself is far from strong, and is subject to headaches, and nervous indigestion. Besides which, I learn from the statistical tables that one child in five dies within the first year of its life; and one child in three, within the fifth. That don't look as if we could never improve in these particulars, I think!

P.P.S. Augustus George is in convulsions.

LYING AWAKE

"My uncle lay with his eyes half closed, and his nightcap drawn almost down to his nose. His fancy was already wandering, and began to mingle up the present scene with the crater of Vesuvius, the French Opera, the Coliseum at Rome, Dolly's Chop-house in London, and all the farrago of noted places with which the brain of a traveller is crammed; in a word, he was just falling asleep."

Thus, that delightful writer, Washington Irving,in his Tales of a Traveller. But, it happened to me the other night to be lying: not with my eyes half closed, but with my eyes wide open; not with my nightcap drawn almost down to my nose, for on sanitary principles I never wear a nightcap: but with my hair pitchforked and touzled all over the pillow; not just falling asleep by any means, but glaringly, persistently, and obstinately, broad awake. Perhaps, with no scientific intention or invention, I was illustrating the theory of the Duality of the Brain; perhaps one part of my brain, being wakeful, sat up to watch the other part which was sleepy. Be that as it may, something in me was as desirous to go to sleep as it possibly could be, but something else in me *would not* go to sleep, and was as obstinate as George the Third.

Thinking of George the Third—for I devote this paper to my train of thoughts as I lay awake: most people lying awake sometimes, and having some interest in the subject—put me in mind of Benjamin Franklin, and so Benjamin Franklin's paper on the art of procuring pleasant dreams, which would seem necessarily to include the art of going to sleep, came into my head. Now, as I often used to read that paper when I was a very small boy, and as I recollect everything I read then as perfectly as I forget everything I read now, I quoted "Get out of bed, beat up and turn your pillow, shake the bed-clothes well with at least twenty shakes, then throw the bed open and leave it to cool; in the meanwhile, continuing undrest, walk about your chamber. When you begin to feel the cold air unpleasant, then return to your bed, and you will soon fall asleep, and your sleep will be sweet and pleasant." Not a bit of it! I performed the whole ceremony, and if it were possible for me to be more saucer-eyed than I was before, that was the only result that came of it.

Except Niagara. The two quotations from Washington Irving and Benjamin Franklin may have put it in my head by an American association of ideas; but there I was, and the Horse-shoe Fall was thundering and tumbling in my eyes and ears, and the very rainbows that I left upon the spray when I really did last look upon it, were beautiful to see. The night-light being quite as plain, however, and sleep seeming to be many thousand miles further off than Niagara, I made up my mind to think a little about Sleep; which I no sooner did than I whirled off in spite of myself to Drury Lane Theatre, and there saw a great actor and dear friend of mine (whom I had been thinking of in the day) playing Macbeth, and heard him apostrophising "the death of each day's life," as I have heard him many a time, in the days that are gone.

But, Sleep. I *will* think about Sleep. I am determined to think (this is the way I went on) about Sleep. I must hold the word Sleep tight and fast, or I shall be off at a tangent in half a second. I feel myself unaccountably straying, already, into Clare Market. Sleep. It would be curious, as illustrating the equality of sleep, to inquire how many of its phenomena are common to all classes, to all degrees of wealth and poverty, to every grade of education and ignorance. Here, for example, is her Majesty Queen Victoria in her palace, this present blessed night, and here is Winking Charley, a sturdy vagrant, in one of her Majesty's jails. Her Majesty has fallen, many thousands of times, from that same Tower, which *I* claim a right to tumble off now and then. So has Winking Charley. Her Majesty in her sleep has opened or prorogued Parliament, or has held a Drawing Room, attired in some very scanty dress, the deficiencies and improprieties of which have caused her great uneasiness. I, in my degree, have suffered unspeakable agitation of mind from taking the chair at a public dinner at the London Tavern in my night-clothes, which not all the courtesy of my kind friend and host MR. BATHE could persuade me were quite adapted to the occasion. Winking Charley has been repeatedly tried in a worse condition. Her Majesty is no stranger to a vault or firmament, of a sort of floor cloth, with an indistinct pattern distantly resembling eyes, which occasionally obtrudes itself on her repose. Neither am I. Neither is Winking Charley. It is quite common to all three of us to skim along with airy strides a little above the ground; also to hold, with the deepest interest, dialogues with various people, all represented by ourselves; and to be at our wit's end to know what they are going to tell us; and to be indescribably astonished by the secrets they disclose. It is probable that we have all three committed murders and hidden bodies. It is pretty certain that we have all desperately wanted to cry out, and have had no voice; that we have all gone to the play and not been able to get in; that we have all dreamed much more of our youth than of our later lives; that—I have lost it! The thread's broken.

And up I go. I, lying here with the night-light before me, up I go, for no reason on earth that I can find out, and drawn by no links that are visible to me, up the Great Saint Bernard! I have lived in Switzerland, and rambled among the mountains; but why I should go there now, and why up the Great Saint Bernard in preference to any other mountain, I have no idea. As I lie here broad awake, and with every sense so sharpened that I can distinctly hear distant noises inaudible to me at another time, I make that journey, as I really did, on the same summer day, with the same happy party—

ah! two since dead, I grieve to think—and there is the same track, with the same black wooden arms to point the way, and there are the same storm-refuges here and there; and there is the same snow falling at the top, and there are the same frosty mists, and there is the same intensely cold convent with its ménagerie smell, and the same breed of dogs fast dying out, and the same breed of jolly young monks whom I mourn to know as humbugs, and the same convent parlour with its piano and the sitting round the fire, and the same supper, and the same lone night in a cell, and the same bright fresh morning when going out into the highly rarefied air was like a plunge into an icy bath. Now, see here what comes along; and why does this thing stalk into my mind on the top of a Swiss mountain!

It is a figure that I once saw, just after dark, chalked upon a door in a little back lane near a country church—my first church. How young a child I may have been at the time I don't know, but it horrified me so intensely—in connexion with the churchyard, I suppose, for it smokes a pipe, and has a big hat with each of its ears sticking out in a horizontal line under the brim, and is not in itself more oppressive than a mouth from ear to ear, a pair of goggle eyes, and hands like two bunches of carrots, five in each, can make it—that it is still vaguely alarming to me to recall (as I have often done before, lying awake) the running home, the looking behind, the horror, of its following me; though whether disconnected from the door, or door and all, I can't say, and perhaps never could. It lays a disagreeable train. I must resolve to think of something on the voluntary principle.

The balloon ascents of this last season. They will do to think about, while I lie awake, as well as anything else. I must hold them tight though, for I feel them sliding away, and in their stead are the Mannings, husband and wife, hanging on the top of Horsemonger Lane Jail. In connexion with which dismal spectacle, I recall this curious fantasy of the mind. That, having beheld that execution, and having left those two forms dangling on the top of the entrance gateway—the man's, a limp, loose suit of clothes as if the man had gone out of them; the woman's, a fine shape, so elaborately corseted and artfully dressed, that it was quite unchanged in its trim appearance as it slowly swung from side to side—I never could, by my uttermost efforts, for some weeks, present the outside of that prison to myself (which the terrible impression I had received continually obliged me to do) without presenting it with the two figures still hanging in the morning air. Until, strolling past the gloomy place one night, when the street was deserted and quiet, and actually seeing that the bodies were not there, my fancy was persuaded, as it were, to take them down and bury them within the precincts of the jail, where they have lain ever since.

The balloon ascents of last season. Let me reckon them up. There were the horse, the bull, the parachute, and the tumbler hanging on —chiefly by his toes, I believe—below the car. Very wrong, indeed, and decidedly to be stopped. But, in connexion with these and similar dangerous exhibitions, it strikes me that that portion of the public whom they entertain, is unjustly reproached. Their pleasure is in the difficulty overcome. They are a public of great faith, and are quite confident that the gentleman will not fall off the horse, or the lady off the bull or out of the parachute, and that the tumbler has a firm hold with his toes. They do not go to see the adventurer vanquished, but triumphant. There is no parallel in public combats between men and beasts, because nobody can answer for the particular beast—unless it were always the same beast, in which case it would be a mere stage-show, which the same public would go in the same state of mind to see, entirely believing in the brute being beforehand safely subdued by the man. That they are not accustomed to calculate hazards and dangers with any nicety, we may know from their rash exposure of themselves in overcrowded steamboats, and unsafe conveyances and places of all kinds. And I cannot help thinking that instead of railing, and attributing savage motives to a people naturally well disposed and humane, it is better to teach them, and lead them argumentatively and reasonably—for they are very reasonable, if you will discuss a matter with them—to more considerate and wise conclusions.

This is a disagreeable intrusion! Here is a man with his throat cut, dashing towards me as I lie awake! A recollection of an old story of a kinsman of mine, who, going home one foggy winter night to Hampstead, when London was much smaller and the road lonesome, suddenly encountered such a figure rushing past him, and presently two keepers from a madhouse in pursuit. A very unpleasant creature indeed, to come into my mind unbidden, as I lie awake.

—The balloon ascents of last season. I must return to the balloons. Why did the bleeding man start out of them? Never mind; if I inquire, he will be back again. The balloons. This particular public have inherently a great pleasure in the contemplation of physical difficulties overcome; mainly, as I take it, because the lives of a large majority of them are exceedingly monotonous and real, and further, are a struggle against continual difficulties, and further still, because anything in the form of accidental injury, or any kind of illness or disability is so very serious in their own sphere. I will explain this seeming paradox of mine. Take the case of a Christmas Pantomime. Surely nobody supposes that the young mother in the pit who falls into fits of laughter when the baby is boiled or sat upon, would be at all diverted by such an occurrence off the stage. Nor is the decent workman in the gallery, who is transported beyond the ignorant present by the delight with which he sees a stout gentleman pushed out of a two pair of stairs window, to be slandered by the suspicion that he would be in the least entertained by such a spectacle in any street in London, Paris, or New York. It always appears to me that the secret of this enjoyment lies in the temporary superiority to the common hazards and mischances of life; in seeing casualties, attended when they really occur with bodily and mental suffering, tears, and poverty, happen through a very rough sort of poetry without the least harm being done to any one—the pretence of distress in a pantomime being so broadly humorous as to be no pretence at all. Much as in the comic fiction I can understand the mother with a very vulnerable baby at home, greatly relishing the invulnerable baby on the stage, so in the Cremorne reality I can understand the mason who is always liable to fall off a scaffold in his working jacket and to be carried to the hospital, having an infinite admiration of the radiant personage in spangles who goes into the clouds upon a bull, or upside down, and who, he takes it for granted—not reflecting upon the thing—has, by uncommon skill and dexterity, conquered such mischances as those to which he and his acquaintance are continually exposed.

I wish the Morgue in Paris would not come here as I lie awake, with its ghastly beds, and the swollen saturated clothes hanging up, and the water dripping, dripping all day long, upon that other swollen saturated something in the corner, like a heap of crushed over-ripe figs that I have seen in Italy! And this detestable Morgue comes back again at the head of a procession of forgotten ghost stories. This will never do. I must think of something else as I lie awake; or like that sagacious animal in the United States who recognised the colonel who was such a dead shot, I am a gone 'Coon. What shall I think of? The late brutal assaults. Very good subject. The late brutal assaults.

(Though whether, supposing I should see, here before me as I lie awake, the awful phantom described in one of those ghost stories, who, with a head-dress of shroud, was always seen looking in through a certain glass door at a certain dead hour—whether, in such a case it would be the least consolation to me to know on philosophical grounds that it was merely my imagination, is a question I can't help asking myself by the way.)

The late brutal assaults. I strongly question the expediency of advocating the revival of whipping for those crimes. It is a natural and generous impulse to be indignant at the perpetration of inconceivable brutality, but I doubt the whipping panacea gravely. Not in the least regard or pity for the criminal, whom I hold in far lower estimation than a mad wolf, but in consideration for the general tone and feeling, which is very much improved since the whipping times. It is bad for a people to be familiarised with such punishments. When the whip went out of Bridewell, and ceased to be flourished at the cart's tail and at the whipping-post, it began to fade out of madhouses, and workhouses, and schools and families, and to give place to a better system everywhere, than cruel driving. It would be hasty, because a few brutes may be inadequately punished, to revive, in any aspect, what, in so many aspects, society is hardly yet happily rid of. The whip is a very contagious kind of thing, and difficult to confine within one set of bounds. Utterly abolish punishment by fine—a barbarous device, quite as much out of date as wager by battle, but particularly connected in the vulgar mind with this class of offence—at least quadruple the term of imprisonment for aggravated assaults

—and above all let us, in such cases, have no Pet Prisoning, vain glorifying, strong soup, and roasted meats, but hard work, and one unchanging and uncompromising dietary of bread and water, well or ill; and we shall do much better than by going down into the dark to grope for the whip among the rusty fragments of the rack, and the branding iron, and the chains and gibbet from the public roads, and the weights that pressed men to death in the cells of Newgate.

I had proceeded thus far, when I found I had been lying awake so long that the very dead began to wake too, and to crowd into my thoughts most sorrowfully. Therefore, I resolved to lie awake no more, but to get up and go out for a night walk—which resolution was an acceptable relief to me, as I dare say it may prove now to a great many more.

OUT OF THE SEASON

It fell to my lot, this last bleak Spring, to find myself in a watering-place out of the Season. A vicious north-east squall blew me into it from foreign parts, and I tarried in it alone for three days, resolved to be exceedingly busy.

On the first day, I began business by looking for two hours at the sea, and staring the Foreign Militia out of countenance. Having disposed of these important engagements, I sat down at one of the two windows of my room, intent on doing something desperate in the way of literary composition, and writing a chapter of unheard-of excellence—with which the present essay has no connexion.

It is a remarkable quality in a watering-place out of the season, that everything in it will and must be looked at. I had no previous suspicion of this fatal truth; but the moment I sat down to write, I began to perceive it. I had scarcely fallen into my most promising attitude, and dipped my pen in the ink, when I found the clock upon the pier—a red-faced clock with a white rim—importuning me in a highly vexatious manner to consult my watch, and see how I was off for Greenwich time. Having no intention of making a voyage or taking an observation, I had not the least need of Greenwich time, and could have put up with watering-place time as a sufficiently accurate article. The pier-clock, however, persisting, I felt it necessary to lay down my pen, compare my watch with him, and fall into a grave solicitude about half-seconds. I had taken up my pen again, and was about to commence that valuable chapter, when a Custom-house cutter under the window requested that I would hold a naval review of her, immediately.

It was impossible, under the circumstances, for any mental resolution, merely human, to dismiss the Custom-house cutter, because the shadow of her topmast fell upon my paper, and the vane played on the masterly blank chapter. I was therefore under the necessity of going to the other window; sitting astride of the chair there, like Napoleon bivouacking in the print; and inspecting the cutter as she lay, all, O! that day, in the way of my chapter. She was rigged to carry a quantity of canvas, but her hull was so very small that four giants aboard of her (three men and a boy) who were vigilantly scraping at her, all together, inspired me with a terror lest they should scrape her away. A fifth giant, who appeared to consider himself "below"—as indeed he was, from the waist downwards—meditated, in such close proximity with the little gusty chimney-pipe, that he seemed to be smoking it. Several boys looked on from the wharf, and, when the gigantic attention appeared to be fully occupied, one or other of these would furtively swing himself in mid-air over the Custom-house cutter, by means of a line pendant from her rigging, like a young spirit of the storm. Presently, a sixth hand brought down two little water-casks; presently afterwards a truck came and delivered a hamper. I was now under an obligation to consider that the cutter was going on a cruise, and to wonder where she was going, and when she was going, and why she was going, and at what date she might be expected back, and who commanded her! With these pressing questions I was fully occupied when the Packet, making ready to go across, and blowing off her spare steam, roared, "Look at me!"

It became a positive duty to look at the Packet preparing to go across; aboard of which, the people newly come down by the railroad were hurrying in a great fluster. The crew had got ther tarry overalls on—and one knew what *that* meant—not to mention the white basins, ranged in neat little piles of a dozen each, behind the door of the after-cabin. One lady as I looked, one resigning and far-seeing woman, took her basin from the store of crockery, as she might have taken a refreshment-ticket, laid herself down on deck with that utensil at her ear, muffled her feet in one shawl, solemnly covered her countenance after the antique manner with another, and on the completion of these preparations appeared by the strength of her volition to become insensible. The mail-bags (O that I myself had the sea-legs of a mail-bag!) were tumbled aboard; the Packet left off roaring, warped out, and made at the white line upon the bar. One dip, one roll, one break of the sea over her bows, and Moore's Almanack or the sage Raphael could not have told me more of the state of things aboard, than I knew.

The famous chapter was all but begun now, and would have been quite begun, but for the wind. It was blowing stiffly from the east, and it rumbled in the chimney and shook the house. That was not much; but, looking out into the wind's grey eye for inspiration, I laid down my pen again to make the remark to myself, how emphatically everything by the sea declares that it has a great concern in the state of the wind. The trees blown all one way; the defences of the harbour reared highest and strongest against the raging point; the shingle flung up on the beach from the same direction; the number of arrows pointed at the common enemy; the sea tumbling in and rushing towards them as if it were inflamed by the sight. This put it in my head that I really ought to go out and take a walk in the wind; so I gave up the magnificent chapter for that day, entirely persuading myself that I was under a moral obligation to have a blow.

I had a good one, and that on the high road—the very high road—on the top of the cliffs, where I met the stage-coach with all the outsides holding their hats on and themselves too, and overtook a flock of sheep with the wool about their necks blown into such great ruffs that they looked like fleecy owls. The wind played upon the light-house as if it were a great whistle, the spray was driven over the sea in a cloud of haze, the ships rolled and pitched heavily, and at intervals long slants and flaws of light made mountain-steeps of communication between the ocean and the sky. A walk of ten miles brought me to a seaside town without a cliff, which, like the town I had come from, was out of the season too. Half of the houses were shut up; half of the other half were to let; the town might have done as much business as it was doing then, if it had been at the bottom of the sea. Nobody seemed to flourish save the attorney; his clerk's pen was going in the bow-window of his wooden house; his brass door-plate alone was free from salt, and had been polished up that morning. On the beach, among the rough luggers and capstans, groups of storm-beaten boatmen, like a sort of marine monsters, watched under the lee of those objects, or stood leaning forward against the wind, looking out through battered spy-glasses. The parlour bell in the Admiral Benbow had grown so flat with being out of the season, that neither could I hear it ring when I pulled the handle for lunch, nor could the young woman in black stockings and strong shoes, who acted as waiter out of the season, until it had been tinkled three times.

Admiral Benbow's cheese was out of the season, but his home-made bread was good, and his beer was perfect. Deluded by some earlier spring day which had been warm and sunny, the Admiral had cleared the firing out of his parlour stove, and had put some flower-pots in—which was amiable and hopeful in the Admiral, but not judicious: the room being, at that present visiting, transcendantly cold. I therefore took the liberty of peeping out across a little stone passage into the Admiral's kitchen, and, seeing a high settle with its back towards me drawn out in front of the Admiral's kitchen fire, I strolled in, bread and cheese in hand, munching and looking about. One landsman and two boatmen were seated on the settle, smoking pipes and drinking beer out of thick pint crockery mugs—mugs peculiar to such places, with parti-coloured rings round them, and ornaments between the rings like frayed-out roots. The landsman was relating his experience, as yet only three nights old, of a fearful running-down case in the Channel, and therein presented to my imagination a sound of music that it will not soon forget.

"At that identical moment of time," said he (he was a prosy man by nature, who rose with his subject), "the night being light and calm, but with a grey mist upon the water that didn't seem to spread for more than two or three mile, I was walking up and down the wooden causeway next the pier, off where it happened, along with a friend of mine, which his name is Mr. Clocker. Mr. Clocker is a grocer over yonder." (From the direction in which he pointed the bowl of his pipe, I might have judged Mr. Clocker to be a merman, established in the grocery trade in five-and-twenty fathoms of water.) "We were smoking our pipes, and walking up and down the causeway, talking of one thing and talking of another. We were quite alone there, except that a few hovellers"(the Kentish name for 'long-shore boatmen like his companions) "were hanging about their lugs, waiting while the tide made, as hovellers will." (One of the two boatmen, thoughtfully regarding me, shut up one eye; this I understood to mean: first, that he took me into the conversation: secondly, that he confirmed the proposition: thirdly, that he announced himself as a hoveller.) "All of a sudden Mr. Clocker and me stood rooted to the spot, by hearing a sound come through the stillness, right over the sea, *like a great sorrowful flute or Æolian harp*. We didn't in the least know what it was, and judge of our surprise when we saw the hovellers, to a man, leap into the boats and tear about to hoist sail and get off, as if they had every one of 'em gone, in a moment, raving mad! But *they* knew it was the cry of distress from the sinking emigrant ship."

When I got back to my watering-place out of the season, and had done my twenty miles in good style, I found that the celebrated Black Mesmerist intended favouring the public that evening in the Hall of the Muses, which he had engaged for the purpose. After a good dinner, seated by the fire in an easy chair, I began to waver in a design I had formed of waiting on the Black Mesmerist, and to incline towards the expediency of remaining where I was. Indeed a point of gallantry was involved in my doing so, inasmuch as I had not left France alone, but had come from the prisons of St. Pélagie with my distinguished and unfortunate friend Madame Roland (in two volumes which I bought for two francs each, at the book-stall in the Place de la Concorde, Paris, at the corner of the Rue Royale). Deciding to pass the evening tête-à-tête with Madame Roland, I derived, as I always do, great pleasure from that spiritual woman's society, and the charms of her brave soul and engaging conversation. I must confess that if she had only some more faults, only a few more passionate failings of any kind, I might love her better; but I am content to believe that the deficiency is in me, and not in her. We spent some sadly interesting hours together on this occasion, and she told me again of her cruel discharge from the Abbaye, and of her being re-arrested before her free feet had sprung lightly up half-a-dozen steps of her own staircase, and carried off to the prison which she only left for the guillotine.

Madame Roland and I took leave of one another before midnight, and I went to bed full of vast intentions for next day, in connexion with the unparalleled chapter. To hear the foreign mail-steamers coming in at dawn of day, and to know that I was not aboard or obliged to get up, was very comfortable; so I rose for the chapter in great force.

I had advanced so far as to sit down at my window again on my second morning, and to write the first half-line of the chapter and strike it out, not liking it, when my conscience reproached me with not having surveyed the watering-place out of the season, after all, yesterday, but with having gone straight out of it at the rate of four miles and a half an hour. Obviously the best amends that I could make for this remissness was to go and look at it without another moment's delay. So—altogether as a matter of duty—I gave up the magnificent chapter for another day, and sauntered out with my hands in my pockets.

All the houses and lodgings ever let to visitors were to let that morning. It seemed to have snowed bills with To Let upon them. This put me upon thinking what the owners of all those apartments did, out of the season; how they employed their time, and occupied their minds. They could not be always going to the Methodist chapels, of which I passed one every other minute. They must have some other recreation. Whether they pretended to take one another's lodgings and opened one another's tea-caddies in fun? Whether they cut slices off their own beef and mutton, and made believe that it belonged to somebody else? Whether they played little dramas of life, as children do, and said, "I ought to come and look at your apartments, and you ought to ask two guineas a-week too much, and then I ought to say I must have the rest of the day to think of it, and then you ought to say that another lady and gentleman with no children in family had made an offer very close to your own terms, and you had passed your word to give them a positive answer in half an hour, and indeed were just going to take the bill down when you heard the knock, and then I ought to take them you know?" Twenty such speculations engaged my thoughts. Then, after passing, still clinging to the walls, defaced rags of the bills of last year's Circus, I came to a back field near a timber-yard where the Circus itself had been, and where there was yet a sort of monkish tonsure on the grass, indicating the spot where the young lady had gone round upon her pet steed Firefly in her daring flight. Turning into the town again, I came among the shops, and they were emphatically out of the season. The chemist had no boxes of ginger-beer powders, no beautifying sea-side soaps and washes, no attractive scents; nothing but his great goggle-eyed red bottles, looking as if the winds of winter and the drift of the salt sea had inflamed them. The grocers' hot pickles, Harvey's Sauce, Doctor Kitchener's Zest, Anchovy Paste, Dundee Marmalade, and the whole stock of luxurious helps to appetite, were hybernating somewhere underground. The china-shop had no trifles from anywhere. The Bazaar had given in altogether, and presented a notice on the shutters that this establishment would re-open at Whitsuntide, and that the proprietor in the meantime might be heard of at Wild Lodge, East Cliff. At the Sea-bathing Establishment, a row of neat little wooden houses seven or eight feet high, I *saw* the proprietor in bed in the shower-bath. As to the bathing-machines, they were (how they got there is not for me to say) at the top of a hill at least a mile and a half off. The library, which I had never seen otherwise than wide open, was tight shut; and two peevish bald old gentlemen seemed to be hermetically sealed up inside, eternally reading the paper. That wonderful mystery, the music-shop, carried it off as usual (except that it had more cabinet pianos in stock), as if season or no season were all one to it. It made the same prodigious display of bright brazen wind-instruments, horribly twisted, worth, as I should conceive, some thousands of pounds, and which it is utterly impossible that anybody in any season can ever play or want to play. It had five triangles in the window, six pairs of castanets, and three harps; likewise every polka with a coloured frontispiece that ever was published; from the original one where a smooth male and female Pole of high rank are coming at the observer with their arms a-kimbo, to the Ratcatcher's Daughter. Astonishing establishment, amazing enigma! Three other shops were pretty much out of the season, what they were used to be in it. First, the shop where they sell the sailors' watches, which had still the old collection of enormous timekeepers, apparently designed to break a fall from the masthead: with places to wind them up, like fire-plugs. Secondly, the shop where they sell the sailors' clothing, which displayed the old sou'-westers, and the old oily suits, and the old pea-jackets, and the old one sea-chest, with its handles like a pair of rope ear-rings. Thirdly, the unchangeable shop for the sale of literature that has been left behind. Here, Dr. Faustus was still going down to very red and yellow perdition, under the superintendence of three green personages of a scaly humour, with excrescential serpents growing out of their blade-bones. Here, the Golden Dreamer and the Norwood Fortune Teller were still on sale at sixpence each, with instructions for making the dumb cake, and reading destinies in tea-cups, and with a picture of a young woman with a high waist lying on a sofa in an attitude so uncomfortable as almost to account for her dreaming at one and the same time of a conflagration, a shipwreck, an earthquake, a skeleton, a church porch, lightning, funerals performed, and a young man in a bright blue coat and canary pantaloons. Here, were Little Warblers and Fairburn's Comic Songsters. Here, too, were ballads on the old ballad paper and in the old confusion of types; with an old man in a cocked hat, and an arm-chair for the illustration to Will Watch the bold Smuggler; and the Friar of Orders Grey, represented by a little girl in a hoop, with a ship in the distance. All these as of yore, when they were infinite delights to me!

It took me so long fully to relish these many enjoyments, that I had not more than an hour before bedtime to devote to Madame Roland. We got on admirably together on the subject of her convent education, and I rose next morning with the full conviction that the day for the great chapter was at last arrived.

It had fallen calm, however, in the night, and as I sat at breakfast I blushed to remember that I had not yet been on the Downs. I a walker, and not yet on the Downs! Really, on so quiet and bright a morning this must be set right. As an essential part of the Whole Duty of Man, therefore, I left the chapter to itself—for the present—and went on the Downs. They were wonderfully green and beautiful, and gave me a good deal to do. When I had done with the free air and the view, I had to go down into the valley and look after the hops (which I know nothing about), and to be equally solicitous as to the cherry orchards. Then I took it on myself to cross-examine a tramping family in black (mother alleged, I have no doubt by herself in person, to have died last week), and to accompany eighteenpence, which produced a great effect, with moral admonitions which produced none at all. Finally, it was late in the afternoon before I got back to the unprecedented chapter, and then I determined that it was out of the season, as the place was, and put it away.

I went at night to the benefit of Mrs. B. Wedgington at the Theatre, who had placarded the town with the admonition, "DON'T FORGET IT!" I made the house, according to my calculation, four and ninepence to begin with, and it may have warmed up, in the course of the evening, to half a sovereign. There was nothing to offend any one,—the good Mr. Baines of Leeds excepted. Mrs. B. Wedgington sang to a grand piano. Mr. B. Wedgington did the like, and also took off his coat, tucked up his trousers, and danced in clogs. Master B. Wedgington, aged ten months, was nursed by a shivering young person in the boxes, and the eye of Mrs. B. Wedgington wandered that way more than once. Peace be with all the Wedgingtons from A to Z. May they find themselves in the Season somewhere!

A POOR MAN'S TALE OF A PATENT

I AM not used to writing for print. What working-man, that never labours less (some Mondays, and Christmas Time and Easter Time excepted) than twelve or fourteen hours a day, is? But I have been asked to put down, plain, what I have got to say; and so I take pen-and-ink, and do it to the best of my power, hoping defects will find excuse.

I was born nigh London, but have worked in a shop at Birmingham (what you would call Manufactories, we call Shops) almost ever since I was out of my time. I served my apprenticeship at Deptford, nigh where I was born, and I am a smith by trade. My name is John. I have been called "Old John" ever since I was nineteen year of age, on account of not having much hair. I am fifty-six year of age at the present time, and I don't find myself with more hair, nor yet with less, to signify, than at nineteen year of age aforesaid.

I have been married five and thirty year, come next April. I was married on All Fools' Day. Let them laugh that win. I won a good wife that day, and it was as sensible a day to me as ever I had.

We have had a matter of ten children, six whereof are living. My eldest son is engineer in the Italian steam-packet "Mezzo Giorno, plying between Marseilles and Naples, and calling at Genoa, Leghorn, and Civita Vecchia." He was a good workman. He invented a many useful little things that brought him in—nothing. I have two sons doing well at Sydney, New South Wales—single, when last heard from. One of my sons (James) went wild and for a soldier, where he was shot in India, living six weeks in hospital with a musket-ball lodged in his shoulder-blade, which he wrote with his own hand. He was the best looking. One of my two daughters (Mary) is comfortable in her circumstances, but water on the chest. The other (Charlotte), her husband run away from her in the basest manner, and she and her three children live with us. The youngest, six year old, has a turn for mechanics.

I am not a Chartist, and I never was. I don't mean to say but what I see a good many public points to complain of, still I don't think that's the way to set them right. If I did think so, I should be a Chartist. But I don't think so, and I am not a Chartist. I read the paper, and hear discussion, at what we call "a parlour," in Birmingham, and I know many good men and workmen who are Chartists. Note. Not Physical force.

It won't be took as boastful in me, if I make the remark (for I can't put down what I have got to say, without putting that down before going any further), that I have always been of an ingenious turn. I once got twenty pound by a screw, and it's in use now. I have been twenty year, off and on, completing an Invention and perfecting it. I perfected of it, last Christmas Eve at ten o'clock at night. Me and my wife stood and let some tears fall over the Model, when it was done and I brought her in to take a look at it.

A friend of mine, by the name of William Butcher, is a Chartist. Moderate. He is a good speaker. He is very animated. I have often heard him deliver that what is, at every turn, in the way of us working-men, is, that too many places have been made, in the course of time, to provide for people that never ought to have been provided for; and that we have to obey forms and to pay fees to support those places when we shouldn't ought. "True" (delivers William Butcher), "all the public has to do this, but it falls heaviest on the working-man, because he has least to spare; and likewise because impediments shouldn't be put in his way, when he wants redress of wrong or furtherance of right." Note. I have wrote down those words from William Butcher's own mouth. W. B. delivering them fresh for the aforesaid purpose.

Now, to my Model again. There it was, perfected of, on Christmas Eve, gone nigh a year, at ten o'clock at night. All the money I could spare I had laid out upon the Model; and when times was bad, or my daughter Charlotte's children sickly, or both, it had stood still, months at a spell. I had pulled it to pieces, and made it over again with improvements, I don't know how often. There it stood, at last, a perfected Model as aforesaid.

William Butcher and me had a long talk, Christmas Day, respecting of the Model. William is very sensible. But sometimes cranky. William said, "What will you do with it, John?" I said, "Patent it." William said, "How patent it, John?" I said, "By taking out a Patent." William then delivered that the law of Patent was a cruel wrong. William said, "John, if you make your invention public, before you get a Patent, any one may rob you of the fruits of your hard work. You are put in a cleft stick, John. Either you must drive a bargain very much against yourself, by getting a party to come forward beforehand with the great expenses of the Patent; or, you must be put about, from post to pillar, among so many parties, trying to make a better bargain for yourself, and showing your invention, that your invention will be took from you over your head." I said, "William Butcher, are you cranky? You are sometimes cranky." William said, "No, John, I tell you the truth;" which he then delivered more at length. I said to W. B. I would Patent the invention myself.

My wife's brother, George Bury of West Bromwich (his wife unfortunately took to drinking, made away with everything, and seventeen times committed to Birmingham Jail before happy release in every point of view), left my wife, his sister, when he dies, a legacy of one hundred and twenty-eight pound ten, Bank of England Stocks. Me and my wife never broke into that money yet. Note. We might come to be old and past our work. We now agreed to Patent the invention. We said we would make a hole in it—I mean in the aforesaid money—and Patent the invention. William Butcher wrote me a letter to Thomas Joy, in London. T. J. is a carpenter, six foot four in height, and plays quoits well. He lives in Chelsea, London, by the church. I got leave from the shop, to be took on again when I come back. I am a good workman Not a Teetotaller; but never drunk. When the Christmas holidays were over, I went up to London by the Parliamentary Train, and hired a lodging for a week with Thomas Joy. He is married. He has one son gone to sea.

Thomas Joy delivered (from a book he had) that the first step to be took, in Patenting the invention, was to prepare a petition unto Queen Victoria. William Butcher had delivered similar, and drawn it up. Note. William is a ready writer. A declaration before a Master in Chancery was to be added to it. That, we likewise drew up. After a deal of trouble I found out a Master, in Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, nigh Temple Bar, where I made the declaration, and paid eighteen-pence. I was told to take the declaration and petition to the Home Office, in Whitehall, where I left it to be signed by the Home Secretary (after I had found the office out), and where I paid two pound, two, and sixpence. In six days he signed it, and I was told to take it to the Attorney-General's chambers, and leave it there for a report. I did so, and paid four pound, four. Note. Nobody all through, ever thankful for their money, but all uncivil.

My lodging at Thomas Joy's was now hired for another week, whereof five days were gone. The Attorney-General made what they called a Report-of-course (my invention being, as William Butcher had delivered before starting, unopposed), and I was sent back with it to the Home Office. They made a Copy of it, which was called a Warrant. For this warrant, I paid seven pound, thirteen, and six. It was sent to the Queen, to sign. The Queen sent it back, signed. The Home Secretary signed it again. The gentleman throwed it at me when I called, and said, "Now take it to the Patent Office in Lincoln's Inn." I was then in my third week at Thomas Joy's, living very sparing, on account of fees. I found myself losing heart.

At the Patent Office in Lincoln's Inn, they made "a draft of the Queen's bill," of my invention, and a "docket of the bill." I paid five pound, ten, and six, for this. They "engrossed two copies of the bill; one for the Signet Office, and one for the Privy-Seal Office." I paid one pound, seven, and six, for this. Stamp duty over and above, three pound. The Engrossing Clerk of the same office engrossed the Queen's bill for signature. I paid him one pound, one. Stamp duty, again, one pound, ten. I was next to take the Queen's bill to the Attorney-General again, and get it signed again. I took it, and paid five pound more. I fetched it away, and took it to the Home Secretary again. He sent it to the Queen again. She signed it again. I paid seven pound, thirteen, and six, more, for this. I had been over a month at Thomas Joy's. I was quite wore out, patience and pocket.

Thomas Joy delivered all this, as it went on, to William Butcher. William Butcher delivered it again to three Birmingham

Parlours, from which it got to all the other Parlours, and was took, as I have been told since, right through all the shops in the North of England. Note. William Butcher delivered, at his Parlour, in a speech that it was a Patent way of making Chartists.

But I hadn't nigh done yet. The Queen's bill was to be took to the Signet Office in Somerset House, Strand—where the stamp shop is. The Clerk of the Signet made "a Signet bill for the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal." I paid him four pound, seven. The Clerk of the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal made "a Privy-Seal bill for the Lord Chancellor." I paid him four pound, two. The Privy-Seal bill was handed over to the Clerk of the Patents, who engrossed the aforesaid. I paid him five pound, seventeen, and eight; at the same time, I paid Stamp-duty for the Patent, in one lump, thirty pound. I next paid for "boxes for the Patent," nine and sixpence. Note. Thomas Joy would have made the same at a profit for eighteen-pence. I next paid "fees to the Deputy, the Lord Chancellor's Purse-bearer," two pound, two. I next paid "fees to the Clerk of the Hanaper," seven pound, thirteen. I next paid "fees to the Deputy Clerk of the Hanaper," ten shillings. I next paid, to the Lord Chancellor again, one pound, eleven, and six. Last of all, I paid, "fees to the Deputy Sealer, and Deputy Chaff-wax," ten shillings and sixpence. I had lodged at Thomas Joy's over six weeks, and the unopposed Patent for my invention, for England only, had cost me ninety-six pound, seven, and eightpence. If I had taken it out for the United Kingdom, it would have cost me more than three hundred pound.

Now, teaching had not come up but very limited when I was young. So much the worse for me, you'll say. I say the same. William Butcher is twenty year younger than me. He knows a hundred year more. If William Butcher had wanted to Patent an invention, he might have been sharper than myself when hustled backwards and forwards among all those offices, though I doubt if so patient. Note. William being sometimes cranky, and consider porters, messengers, and clerks.

Thereby I say nothing of my being tired of my life, while I was Patenting my invention. But I put this: Is it reasonable to make a man feel as if, in inventing an ingenious improvement meant to do good, he had done something wrong? How else can a man feel, when he is met by such difficulties at every turn? All inventors taking out a Patent MUST feel so. And look at the expense. How hard on me, and how hard on the country if there's any merit in me (and my invention is took up now, I am thankful to say, and doing well), to put me to all that expense before I can move a finger! Make the addition yourself, and it'll come to ninety-six pound, seven, and eightpence. No more, and no less.

What can I say against William Butcher, about places? Look at the Home Secretary, the Attorney-General, the Patent Office, the Engrossing Clerk, the Lord Chancellor, the Privy Seal, the Clerk of the Patents, the Lord Chancellor's Purse-Bearer, the Clerk of the Hanaper, the Deputy Clerk of the Hanaper, the Deputy Sealer, and the Deputy Chaff-wax. No man in England could get a Patent for an Indian-rubber band, or an iron-hoop, without feeing all of them. Some of them, over and over again. I went through thirty-five stages. I began with the Queen upon the Throne. I ended with the Deputy Chaff-wax. Note. I should like to see the Deputy Chaff-wax. Is it a man, or what is it?

What I had to tell, I have told. I have wrote it down. I hope it's plain. Not so much in the handwriting (though nothing to boast of there), as in the sense of it. I will now conclude with Thomas Joy. Thomas said to me, when we parted, "John, if the laws of this country were as honest as they ought to be, you would have come to London—registered an exact description and drawing of your invention—paid half-a-crown or so for doing of it—and therein and thereby have got your Patent."

My opinion is the same as Thomas Joy. Further. In William Butcher's delivering "that the whole gang of Hanapers and Chaff-waxers must be done away with, and that England has been chaffed and waxed sufficient," I agree.

THE DETECTIVE POLICE

We are not by any means devout believers in the old Bow Street Police. To say the truth, we think there was a vast amount of humbug about those worthies. Apart from many of them being men of very indifferent character, and far too much in the habit of consorting with thieves and the like, they never lost a public occasion of jobbing and trading in mystery and making the most of themselves. Continually puffed besides by incompetent magistrates anxious to conceal their own deficiencies, and hand-in-glove with the penny-a-liners of that time, they became a sort of superstition. Although as a Preventive Police they were utterly ineffective, and as a Detective Police were very loose and uncertain in their operations, they remain with some people a superstition to the present day.

On the other hand, the Detective Force organised since the establishment of the existing Police, is so well chosen and trained, proceeds so systematically and quietly, does its business in such a workmanlike manner, and is always so calmly and steadily engaged in the service of the public, that the public really do not know enough of it, to know a tithe of its usefulness. Impressed with this conviction, and interested in the men themselves, we represented to the authorities at Scotland Yard, that we should be glad, if there were no official objection, to have some talk with the Detectives. A most obliging and ready permission being given, a certain evening was appointed with a certain Inspector for a social conference between ourselves and the Detectives, at The Household Words Office in Wellington Street, Strand, London. In consequence of which appointment the party "came off," which we are about to describe. And we beg to repeat that, avoiding such topics as it might for obvious reasons be injurious to the public, or disagreeable to respectable individuals, to touch upon in print, our description is as exact as we can make it.

The reader will have the goodness to imagine the Sanctum Sanctorum of Household Words. Anything that best suits the reader's fancy, will best represent that magnificent chamber. We merely stipulate for a round table in the middle, with some glasses and cigars arranged upon it; and the editorial sofa elegantly hemmed in between that stately piece of furniture and the wall.

It is a sultry evening at dusk. The stones of Wellington Street are hot and gritty, and the watermen and hackney-coachmen at the Theatre opposite, are much flushed and aggravated. Carriages are constantly setting down the people who have come to Fairy-Land; and there is a mighty shouting and bellowing every now and then, deafening us for the moment, through the open windows.

Just at dusk, Inspectors Wield and Stalker are announced; but we do not undertake to warrant the orthography of any of the names here mentioned. Inspector Wield presents Inspector Stalker. Inspector Wield is a middle-aged man of a portly presence, with a large, moist, knowing eye, a husky voice, and a habit of emphasising his conversation by the aid of a corpulent fore-finger, which is constantly in juxtaposition with his eyes or nose. Inspector Stalker is a shrewd, hard-headed Scotchman—in appearance not at all unlike a very acute, thoroughly-trained schoolmaster, from the Normal Establishment at Glasgow. Inspector Wield one might have known, perhaps, for what he is—Inspector Stalker, never.

The ceremonies of reception over, Inspectors Wield and Stalker observe that they have brought some sergeants with them. The sergeants are presented—five in number, Sergeant Dornton, Sergeant Witchem, Sergeant Mith, Sergeant Fendall, and Sergeant Straw. We have the whole Detective Force from Scotland Yard, with one exception. They sit down in a semi-circle (the two Inspectors at the two ends) at a little distance from the round table, facing the editorial sofa. Every man of them, in a glance, immediately takes an inventory of the furniture and an accurate sketch of the editorial presence. The Editor feels that any gentleman in company could take him up, if need should be, without the smallest hesitation, twenty years hence.

The whole party are in plain clothes. Sergeant Dornton about fifty years of age, with a ruddy face and a high sunburnt forehead, has the air of one who has been a Sergeant in the army—he might have sat to Wilkie for the Soldier in the Reading of the Will. He is famous for steadily pursuing the inductive process, and, from small beginnings, working on from clue to clue until he bags his man. Sergeant Witchem, shorter and thicker-set, and marked with the small-pox, has something of a reserved and thoughtful air, as if he were engaged in deep arithmetical calculations. He is renowned for his acquaintance with the swell mob. Sergeant Mith, a smooth-faced man with a fresh bright complexion, and a strange air of simplicity, is a dab at housebreakers. Sergeant Fendall, a light-haired, well-spoken, polite person, is a prodigious hand at pursuing private inquiries of a delicate nature. Straw, a little wiry Sergeant of meek demeanour and strong sense, would knock at a door and ask a series of questions in any mild character you choose to prescribe to him, from a charity-boy upwards, and seem as innocent as an infant. They are, one and all, respectable-looking men; of perfectly good deportment and unusual intelligence; with nothing lounging or slinking in their manners; with an air of keen observation and quick perception when addressed; and generally presenting in their faces, traces more or less marked of habitually leading lives of strong mental excitement. They have all good eyes; and they all can, and they all do, look full at whomsoever they speak to.

We light the cigars, and hand round the glasses (which are very temperately used indeed), and the conversation begins by a modest amateur reference on the Editorial part to the swell mob. Inspector

Wield immediately removes his cigar from his lips, waves his right hand, and says, "Regarding the swell mob, sir, I can't do better than call upon Sergeant Witchem. Because the reason why? I'll tell you. Sergeant Witchem is better acquainted with the swell mob than any officer in London."

Our heart leaping up when we beheld this rainbow in the sky, we turn to Sergeant Witchem, who very concisely, and in well-chosen language, goes into the subject forthwith. Meantime, the whole of his brother officers are closely interested in attending to what he says, and observing its effect. Presently they begin to strike in, one or two together, when an opportunity offers, and the conversation becomes general. But these brother officers only come in to the assistance of each other—not to the contradiction—and a more amicable brotherhood there could not be. From the swell mob, we diverge to the kindred topics of cracksmen, fences, public-house dancers, area-sneaks, designing young people who go out "gonophing," and other "schools."' It is observable throughout these revelations, that Inspector Stalker, the Scotchman, is always exact and statistical, and that when any question of figures arises, everybody as by one consent pauses, and looks to him.

When we have exhausted the various schools of Art—during which discussion the whole body have remained profoundly attentive, except when some unusual noise at the Theatre over the way has induced some gentleman to glance inquiringly towards the window in that direction, behind his next neighbour's back—we burrow for information on such points as the following. Whether there really are any highway robberies in London, or whether some circumstances not convenient to be mentioned by the aggrieved party, usually precede the robberies complained of, under that head, which quite change their character? Certainly the latter, almost always. Whether in the case of robberies in houses where servants are necessarily exposed to doubt, innocence under suspicion ever becomes so like guilt in appearance, that a good officer need be cautious how he judges it? Undoubtedly. Nothing is so common or deceptive as such appearances at first. Whether in a place of public amusement, a thief knows an officer, and an officer knows a thief—supposing them, beforehand, strangers to each other—because each recognises in the other, under all disguise, an inattention to what is going on, and a purpose that is not the purpose of being entertained? Yes. That's the way exactly. Whether it is reasonable or ridiculous to trust to the alleged experiences of thieves as narrated by themselves, in prison, or penitentiaries, or anywhere? In general, nothing more absurd. Lying is their habit and their trade; and they would rather lie—even if they hadn't an interest in it, and didn't want to make themselves agreeable—than tell the truth.

From these topics, we glide into a review of the most celebrated and horrible of the great crimes that have been committed within the last fifteen or twenty years. The men engaged in the discovery of almost all of them, and in the pursuit or apprehension of the murderers, are here, down to the very last instance. One of our guests gave chase to and boarded the emigrant ship, in which the murderess last hanged in London was supposed to have embarked. We learn from him that his errand was not announced to the passengers, who may have no idea of it to this hour. That he went below, with the captain, lamp in hand—it being dark, and the whole steerage abed and sea-sick—and engaged the Mrs. Manning who *was* on board, in a conversation about her luggage, until she was, with no small pains, induced to raise her head, and turn her face towards the light. Satisfied that she was not the object of his search, he quietly re-embarked in the Government steamer alongside, and steamed home again with the intelligence.

When we have exhausted these subjects, too, which occupy a considerable time in the discussion, two or three leave their chairs, whisper Sergeant Witchem, and resume their seats. Sergeant Witchem leaning forward a little, and placing a hand on each of his legs, then modestly speaks as follows:

"My brother-officers wish me to relate a little account of my taking Tally-ho Thompson. A man oughtn't to tell what he has done himself; but still, as nobody was with me, and, consequently, as nobody but myself can tell it, I'll do it in the best way I can, if it should meet your approval."

We assure Sergeant Witchem that he will oblige us very much, and we all compose ourselves to listen with great interest and attention.

"Tally-ho Thompson," says Sergeant Witchem, after merely wetting his lips with his brandy-and-water, "Tally-ho Thompson was a famous horse-stealer, couper, and magsman. Thompson, in conjunction with a pal that occasionally worked with him, gammoned a countryman out of a good round sum of money, under pretence of getting him a situation—the regular old dodge—and was afterwards in the 'Hue and Cry' for a horse—a horse that he stole, down in Hertfordshire. I had to look after Thompson, and I applied myself, of course, in the first instance, to discovering where he was. Now, Thompson's wife lived, along with a little daughter, at Chelsea. Knowing that Thompson was somewhere in the country, I watched the house—especially at post-time in the morning—thinking Thompson was pretty likely to write to her. Sure enough, one morning the postman comes up, and delivers a letter at Mrs. Thompson's door. Little girl opens the door, and takes it in. We're not always sure of postmen, though the people at the post-offices are always very obliging. A postman may help us, or he may not,—just as it happens. However, I go across the road, and I say to the postman, after he has left the letter, 'Good morning! how are you?' 'How are *you?*' says he. 'You've just delivered a letter for Mrs. Thompson.' 'Yes, I have.' 'You didn't happen to remark what the post-mark was, perhaps?' 'No,' says he, 'I didn't.' 'Come,' says I, 'I'll be plain with you. I'm in a small way of business, and I have given Thompson credit, and I can't afford to lose what he owes me. I know he's got money, and I know he's in the country, and if you could tell me what the post-mark was, I should be very much obliged to you, and you'd do a service to a tradesman in a small way of business that can't afford a loss.' 'Well,' he said, 'I do assure you that I did not observe what the post-mark was; all I know is, that there was money in the letter—I should say a sovereign.' This was enough for me, because of course I knew that Thompson having sent his wife money, it was probable she'd write to Thompson, by return of post, to acknowledge the receipt. So I said 'Thankee' to the postman, and I kept on the watch. In the afternoon I saw the little girl come out. Of course I followed her. She went into a stationer's shop, and I needn't say to you that I looked in at the window. She bought some writing-paper and envelopes, and a pen. I think to myself, 'That'll do!'—watch her home again—and don't go away, you may be sure, knowing that Mrs. Thompson was writing her letter to Tally-ho, and that the letter would be posted presently. In about an hour or so, out came the little girl again, with the letter in her hand. I went up, and said something to the child, whatever it might have been; but I couldn't see the direction of the letter, because she held it with the seal upwards. However, I observed that on the back of the letter there was what we call a kiss—a drop of wax by the side of the seal—and again, you understand, that was enough for me. I saw her post the letter, waited till she was gone, then went into the shop, and asked to see the Master. When he came out, I told him, 'Now, I'm an Officer in the Detective Force; there's a letter with a kiss been posted here just now, for a man that I'm in search of; and what I have to ask of you, is, that you will let me look at the direction of that letter.' He was very civil—took a lot of letters from the box in the window—shook 'em out on the counter with the faces downwards—and there among 'm was the identical letter with the kiss. It was directed, Mr. Thomas Pigeon, Post Office, B——, to be left 'till called for. Down I went to B—— (a hundred and twenty miles or so) that night. Early next morning I went to the Post Office; saw the gentleman in charge of that department; told him who I was; and that my object was to see, and track, the party that should come for the letter for Mr. Thomas Pigeon. He was very polite, and said, 'You shall have every assistance we can give you; you can wait inside the office; and we'll take care to let you know when anybody comes for the letter.' Well, I waited there three days, and began to think that nobody ever *would* come. At last the clerk whispered to me, 'Here! Detective! Somebody's come for the letter!' 'Keep him a minute,' said I, and I ran round to the outside of the office. There I saw a young chap with the appearance of an Ostler, holding a horse by the bridle—stretching the bridle across the pavement, while he waited at the Post Office window for the letter. I began to pat the horse, and that; and I said to the boy, 'Why, this is Mr. Jones's Mare!' 'No. It an't.' 'No?' said I. 'She's very like Mr. Jones's Mare!' 'She an't Mr. Jones's Mare, anyhow,' says he. 'It's Mr. So and So's, of the Warwick Arms.' And up he jumped, and off he went—letter and all. I got a cab, followed on the box, and was so quick after him that I came into the stable-yard of the Warwick Arms, by one gate, just as he came in by another. I went into the bar, where there was a young woman serving, and called for a glass of brandy-and-water. He came in directly, and handed her the letter. She casually looked at it, without saying anything, and stuck it up behind the glass over the chimney-piece. What was to be done next?

"I turned it over in my mind while I drank my brandy-and-water (looking pretty sharp at the letter the while), but I couldn't see my way out of it at all. I tried to get lodgings in the house, but there had been a horse-fair, or something of that sort, and it was full. I was obliged to put up somewhere else, but I came backwards and forwards to the bar for a couple of days, and there was the letter always behind the glass. At last I thought I'd write a letter to Mr. Pigeon myself, and see what that would do. So I wrote one, and posted it, but I purposely addressed it, Mr. John Pigeon, instead of Mr. Thomas Pigeon, to see what *that* would do. In the morning (a very wet morning it was) I watched the postman down the street, and cut into the bar, just before he reached the Warwick Arms. In he came presently with my letter. 'Is there a Mr. John Pigeon staying here?' 'No!—stop a bit though,' says the barmaid; and she took down the letter behind the glass. 'No,' says she, 'it's Thomas, and *he* is not staying here. Would you do me a favour, and post this for me, as it is so wet?' The postman said Yes; she folded it in another envelope, directed it, and gave it him. He put it in his hat, and away he went.

"I had no difficulty in finding out the direction of that letter. It was addressed Mr. Thomas Pigeon, Post Office, R——, Northamptonshire, to be left till called for. Off I started directly for R——; I said the same at the Post Office there, as I had said at B——; and again I waited three days before anybody came. At last another chap on horseback came. 'Any letters for Mr. Thomas Pigeon?' 'Where do you come from?' 'New Inn, near R——.' He got the letter, and away *he* went at a canter.

"I made my inquiries about the New Inn, near R——, and hearing it was a solitary sort of house, a little in the horse line, about a couple of miles from the station, I thought I'd go and have a look at it. I found it what it had been described, and sauntered in, to look about me. The landlady was in the bar, and I was trying to get into conversation with her; asked her how business was, and spoke about the wet weather, and so on; when I saw, through an open door, three men sitting by the fire in a sort of parlour, or kitchen; and one of those men, according to the description I had of him, was Tally-ho Thompson!

"I went and sat down among 'em and tried to make things agreeable; but they were very shy—wouldn't talk at all—looked at me, and at one another, in a way quite the reverse of sociable. I reckoned 'em up, and finding that they were all three bigger men than me, and considering that their looks were ugly—that it was a lonely place—railroad station two miles off—and night coming on—thought

I couldn't do better than have a drop of brandy-and-water to keep my courage up. So I called for my brandy-and-water; and as I was sitting drinking it by the fire, Thompson got up and went out.

"Now the difficulty of it was, that I wasn't sure it *was* Thompson, because I had never set eyes on him before; and what I had wanted was to be quite certain of him. However, there was nothing for it now, but to follow, and put a bold face upon it. I found him talking, outside in the yard, with the landlady. It turned out afterwards that he was wanted by a Northampton officer for something else, and that, knowing that officer to be pock-marked (as I am myself), he mistook me for him. As I have observed, I found him talking to the landlady, outside. I put my hand upon his shoulder—this way—and said, "Tally-ho Thompson, it's no use. I know you. I'm an officer from London, and I take you into custody for felony!' 'That be d—d!' says Tally-ho Thompson.

"We went back into the house, and the two friends began to cut up rough, and their looks didn't please me at all, I assure you. 'Let the man go. What are you going to do with him?' 'I'll tell you what I'm going to do with him. I'm going to take him to London to-night, as sure as I'm alive. I'm not alone here, whatever you may think. You mind your own business, and keep yourselves to yourselves. It'll be better for you, for I know you both very well.' *I*'d never seen or heard of 'em in all my life, but my bouncing cowed 'em a bit, and they kept off, while Thompson was making ready to go. I thought to myself, however, that they might be coming after me on the dark road, to rescue Thompson; so I said to the landlady, 'What men have you got in the house, Missis?' 'We haven't got no men here,' she says, sulkily. 'You have got an ostler, I suppose?' 'Yes, we've got an ostler.' 'Let me see him.' Presently he came, and a shaggy-headed young fellow he was. 'Now attend to me, young man,' says I; 'I'm a Detective Officer from London. This man's name is Thompson. I have taken him into custody for felony. I am going to take him to the railroad station. I call upon you in the Queen's name to assist me; and mind you, my friend, you'll get yourself into more trouble than you know of, if you don't!' You never saw a person open his eyes so wide. 'Now, Thompson, come along!' says I. But when I took out the handcuffs, Thompson cries, 'No! None of that! I won't stand *them!* I'll go along with you quiet, but I won't bear none of that!' 'Tally-ho Thompson,' I said, 'I'm willing to behave as a man to you, if you are willing to behave as a man to me. Give me your word that you'll come peaceably along, and I don't want to handcuff you.' 'I will,' says Thompson, 'but I'll have a glass of brandy first.' 'I don't care if I've another,' said I. 'We'll have two more, Missis,' said the friends, 'and con-found you, Constable, you'll give your man a drop, won't you?' I was agreeable to that, so we had it all round, and then my man and I took Tally-ho Thompson safe to the railroad, and I carried him to London that night. He was afterwards acquitted, on account of a defect in the evidence; and I understand he always praises me up to the skies, and says I'm one of the best of men."

This story coming to a termination amidst general applause, Inspector Wield, after a little grave smoking, fixes his eye on his host, and thus delivers himself:

"It wasn't a bad plant that of mine, on Fikey, the man accused of forging the Sou'-Western Railway debentures—it was only t'other day—because the reason why? I'll tell you.

"I had information that Fikey and his brother kept a factory over yonder there,"—indicating any region on the Surrey side of the river—"where he bought second-hand carriages; so after I'd tried in vain to get hold of him by other means, I wrote him a letter in an assumed name, saying that I'd got a horse and shay to dispose of, and would drive down next day that he might view the lot, and make an offer—very reasonable it was, I said—a reg'lar bargain. Straw and me then went off to a friend of mine that's in the livery and job business, and hired a turn-out for the day, a precious smart turn-out it was—quite a slap-up thing! Down we drove, accordingly, with a friend (who's not in the Force himself); and leaving my friend in the shay near a public-house, to take care of the horse, we went to the factory, which was some little way off. In the factory, there was a number of strong fellows at work, and after reckoning 'em up, it was clear to me that it wouldn't do to try it on there. They were too many for us. We must get our man out of doors. 'Mr. Fikey at home?' 'No, he ain't.' 'Expected home soon?' Why, no, not soon.' 'Ah! Is his brother here?' '*I*'m his brother.' 'Oh! well, this is an ill-conwenience, this is. I wrote him a letter yesterday, saying I'd got a little turn-out to dispose of, and I've took the trouble to bring the turn-out down a' purpose, and now he ain't in the way.' 'No, he ain't in the way. You couldn't make it convenient to call again, could you?' 'Why, no, I couldn't. I want to sell; that's the fact; and I can't put it off. Could you find him anywheres?' At first he said No, he couldn't, and then he wasn't sure about it, and then he'd go and try. So at last he went up-stairs, where there was a sort of loft, and presently down comes my man himself in his shirt-sleeves.

"'Well,' he says, 'this seems to be raything a pressing matter of yours.' 'Yes,' I says, 'it *is* rayther a pressing matter, and you'll find it a bargain—dirt cheap.' 'I ain't in partickler want of a bargain just now,' he says, 'but where is it?' 'Why,' I says, 'the turn-out's just outside. Come and look at it.' He hasn't any suspicions, and away we go. And the first thing that happens is, that the horse runs away with my friend (who knows no more of driving than a child) when he takes a little trot along the road to show his paces. You never saw such a game in your life!

"When the bolt is over, and the turn-out has come to a standstill again, Fikey walks round and round it as grave as a judge—me too. 'There, sir!' I says. 'There's a neat thing!' 'It ain't a bad style of thing,' he says. 'I believe you,' says I. 'And there's a horse!'—for I saw him looking at it. 'Rising eight!' I says, rubbing his fore-legs. (Bless you, there ain't a man in the world knows less of horses than I do, but I'd heard my friend at the Livery Stables say he was eight year old, so I says, as knowing as possible, 'Rising eight.') 'Rising eight, is he?' says he. 'Rising eight,' says I. 'Well,' he says, 'what do you want for it?' 'Why, the first and last figure for the whole concern is five-and-twenty pound!' 'That's very cheap!' he says, looking at me. 'Ain't it?' I says. 'I told you it was a bargain! Now, without any higgling and haggling about it, what I want is to sell, and that's my price. Further, I'll make it easy to you, and take half the money down, and you can do a bit of stiff[1] for the balance.' 'Well,' he says again, 'that's very cheap.' 'I believe you,' says I; 'get in and try it, and you'll buy it. Come! take a trial!'

"Ecod, he gets in, and we get in, and we drive along the road, to show him to one of the railway clerks that was hid in the public-house window to identify him. But the clerk was bothered, and didn't know whether it was him, or wasn't—because the reason why? I'll tell you,—on account of his having shaved his whiskers. 'It's a clever little horse,' he says, 'and trots well; and the shay runs light.' 'Not a doubt about it,' I says. 'And now, Mr. Fikey, I may as well make it all right, without wasting any more of your time. The fact is, I'm Inspector Wield, and you're my prisoner.' 'You don't mean that?' he says. 'I do, indeed.' 'Then burn my body,' says Fikey, 'if this ain't *too* bad!'

"Perhaps you never saw a man so knocked over with surprise. 'I hope you'll let me have my coat?' he says. 'By all means.' 'Well, then, let's drive to the factory.' 'Why, not exactly that, I think,' said I; 'I've been there, once before, to-day. Suppose we send for it.' He saw it was no go, so he sent for it, and put it on, and we drove him up to London, comfortable."

This reminiscence is in the height of its success, when a general proposal is made to the fresh-complexioned, smooth-faced officer, with the strange air of simplicity, to tell the "Butcher's Story."

The fresh-complexioned, smooth-faced officer, with the strange air of simplicity, began with a rustic smile, and in a soft, wheedling tone of voice, to relate the Butcher's Story, thus:

"It's just about six years ago, now, since information was given at Scotland Yard of there being extensive robberies of lawns and silks going on, at some wholesale houses in the City. Directions were given for the business being looked into; and Straw, and Fendall, and me, we were all in it."

"When you received your instructions," said we, "you went away, and held a sort of Cabinet Council together!"

The smooth-faced officer coaxingly replied, "Ye-es. Just so. We turned it over among ourselves a good deal. It appeared, when we went into it, that the goods were sold by the receivers extraordinarily cheap—much cheaper than they could have been if they had been honestly come by. The receivers were in the trade, and kept capital shops—establishments of the first respectability—one of 'em at the West End, one down in Westminster. After a lot of watching and inquiry, and this and that among ourselves, we found that the job was managed, and the purchases of the stolen goods made, at a little public-house near Smithfield, down by Saint Bartholomew's; where the Warehouse Porters, who were the thieves, took 'em for that purpose, don't you see? and made appointments to meet the people that went between themselves and the receivers. This public-house was principally used by journeymen butchers from the country, out of place, and in want of situations; so, what did we do, but—ha, ha, ha!—we agreed that I should be dressed up like a butcher myself, and go and live there!"

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[1] Give a bill.

Never, surely, was a faculty of observation better brought to bear upon a purpose, than that which picked out this officer for the part. Nothing in all creation could have suited him better. Even while he spoke, he became a greasy, sleepy, shy, good-natured, chuckle-headed, unsuspicious, and confiding young butcher. His very hair seemed to have suet in it, as he made it smooth upon his head, and his fresh complexion to be lubricated by large quantities of animal food.

"—So I—ha, ha, ha!" (always with the confiding snigger of the foolish young butcher) "so I dressed myself in the regular way, made up a little bundle of clothes, and went to the public-house, and asked if I could have a lodging there? They says, 'Yes, you can have a lodging here,' and I got a bedroom, and settled myself down in the tap. There was a number of people about the place, and coming backwards and forwards to the house; and first one says, and then another says, 'Are you from the country, young man?' 'Yes,' I says, 'I am. I'm come out of Northamptonshire, and I'm quite lonely here, for I don't know London at all, and it's such a mighty big town.' 'It *is* a big town,' they says. 'Oh, it's a *very* big town!' I says. 'Really and truly I never was in such a town. It quite confuses of me!'—and all that, you know.

"When some of the Journeymen Butchers that used the house, found that I wanted a place, they says, 'Oh, we'll get you a place!' And they actually took me to a sight of places, in Newgate Market, Newport Market, Clare, Carnaby—I don't know where all. But the wages was—ha, ha, ha—was not sufficient, and I never could suit myself, don't you see! Some of the queer frequenters of the house were a little suspicious of me at first, and I was obliged to be very cautious indeed, how I communicated with Straw or Fendall. Sometimes, when I went out, pretending to stop and look into the shop windows, and just casting my eye round, I used to see some of 'em following me; but being perhaps better accustomed than they thought for, to that sort of thing, I used to lead 'em on as far as I thought necessary or convenient—sometimes a long way—and then turn sharp round, and meet 'em, and say, 'Oh, dear, how glad I am to come upon you so fortunate! This London's such a place, I'm blowed if I an't lost again!' And then we'd go back all together, to the public-house, and—ha, ha, ha! and smoke our pipes, don't you see?

"They were very attentive to me, I am sure. It was a common thing, while I was living there, for some of 'em to take me out, and show me London. They showed me the Prisons—showed me Newgate—and when they showed me Newgate, I stops at the place where the Porters pitch their loads, and says, 'Oh dear, is this where they hang the men? Oh Lor!' 'That!' they says, 'what a simple cove he is! *That* ain't it!' And then, they pointed out which *was* it, and I says, 'Lor!' and they says, 'Now you'll know it agen, won't you?' And I said I thought I should if I tried hard—and I assure you I kept a sharp look out for the City Police when we were out in this way, for if any of 'em had happened to know me, and had spoke to me, it would have been all up in a minute. However, by good luck such a thing never happened, and all went on quiet: though the difficulties I had in communicating with my brother officers were quite extraordinary.

"The stolen goods that were brought to the public-house by the Warehouse Porters, were always disposed of in a back parlour. For a long time, I never could get into this parlour, or see what was done there. As I sat smoking my pipe, like an innocent young chap, by the tap-room fire, I'd hear some of the parties to the robbery, as they came in and out, say softly to the landlord, 'Who's that! What does *he* do here?' 'Bless your soul,' says the landlord, 'he's only a'—ha, ha, ha!—'he's only a green young fellow from the country, as is looking for a butcher's sitiwation. Don't mind *him!*' So, in course of time, they were so convinced of my being green, and got to be so accustomed to me, that I was as free of the parlour as any of 'em, and I have seen as much as Seventy Pound's Worth of fine lawn sold there, in one night, that was stolen from a warehouse in Friday Street. After the sale the buyers always stood treat—hot supper, or dinner, or what not—and they'd say on those occasions, 'Come on, Butcher! Put your best leg foremost, young 'un, and walk into it!' Which I used to do—and hear, at table, all manner of particulars that it was very important for us Detectives to know.

"This went on for ten weeks. I lived in the public-house all the time, and never was out of the Butcher's dress—except in bed. At last, when I had followed seven of the thieves, and set 'em to rights—that's an expression of ours, don't you see, by which I mean to say that I traced 'em, and found out where the robberies were done, and all about 'em—Straw, and Fendall, and I, gave one another the office, and at a time agreed upon, a descent was made upon the public-house, and the apprehensions effected. One of the first things the officers did, was to collar me—for the parties to the robbery weren't to suppose yet, that I was anything but a Butcher—on which the landlord cries out, 'Don't take *him*,' he says, 'whatever you do! He's only a poor young chap from the country, and butter wouldn't melt in his mouth!' However, they—ha, ha, ha!—they took me, and pretended to search my bedroom, where nothing was found but an old fiddle belonging to the landlord, that had got there somehow or another. But it entirely changed the landlord's opinion, for when it was produced, he says, 'My fiddle! The Butcher's a pur-loiner! I give him into custody for the robbery of a musical instrument!'

"The man that had stolen the goods in Friday Street was not taken yet. He had told me, in confidence, that he had his suspicions there was something wrong (on account of the City Police having captured one of the party), and that he was going to make himself scarce. I asked him, 'Where do you mean to go, Mr. Shepherdson?' 'Why, Butcher,' says he, 'the Setting Moon, in the Commercial Road, is a snug house, and I shall hang out there for a time. I shall call myself Simpson, which appears to me to be a modest sort of a name. Perhaps you'll give us a look in, Butcher?' 'Well,' says I, 'I think I *will* give you a call'—which I fully intended, don't you see, because, of course, he was to be taken! I went over to the Setting Moon next day, with a brother officer, and asked at the bar for Simpson. They pointed out his room, up-stairs. As we were going up, he looks down over the banisters, and calls out, 'Halloa, Butcher! is that you?' 'Yes, it's me. How do you find yourself?' 'Bobbish,' he says; 'but who's that with you?' 'It's only a young man, that's a friend of mine,' I says. 'Come along, then,' says he; 'any friend of the Butcher's is as welcome as the Butcher!' So I made my friend acquainted with him, and we took him into custody.

"You have no idea, sir, what a sight it was, in Court, when they first knew that I wasn't a Butcher, after all! I wasn't produced at the first examination, when there was a remand; but I was at the second. And when I stepped into the box, in full police uniform, and the whole party saw how they had been done, actually a groan of horror and dismay proceeded from 'em in the dock!

"At the Old Bailey, when their trials came on, Mr. Clarkson was engaged for the defence, and he *couldn't* make out how it was, about the Butcher. He thought, all along, it was a real Butcher. When the counsel for the prosecution said, "I will now call before you, gentlemen, the Police-officer,' meaning myself, Mr. Clarkson says, 'Why Police-officer? Why more Police-officers? I don't want Police. We have had a great deal too much of the Police. I want the Butcher!' However, sir, he had the Butcher and the Police-officer, both in one. Out of seven prisoners committed for trial, five were found guilty, and some of 'em were transported. The respectable firm at the West End got a term of imprisonment: and that's the Butcher's Story!'

The story done, the chuckle-headed Butcher again resolved himself into the smooth-faced Detective. But he was so extremely tickled by their having taken him about, when he was that Dragon in disguise, to show him London, that he could not help reverting to that point in his narrative; and gently repeating with the Butcher snigger, " 'Oh, dear,' I says, 'is that where they hang the men? Oh, Lor!' '*That!*' says they. 'What a simple cove he is!' "

It being now late, and the party very modest in their fear of being too diffuse, there were some tokens of separation; when Sergeant Dornton, the soldierly-looking man, said, looking round him with a smile:

"Before we break up, sir, perhaps you might have some amusement in hearing of the Adventures of a Carpet Bag. They are very short; and I think, curious."

We welcomed the Carpet Bag, as cordially as Mr. Shepherdson welcomed the false Butcher at the Setting Moon. Sergeant Dornton proceeded.

"In 1847, I was despatched to Chatham, in search of one Mesheck, a Jew. He had been carrying on, pretty heavily, in the bill-stealing way, getting acceptances from young men of good connexions (in the army chiefly), on pretence of discount, and bolting with the same.

"Mesheck was off, before I got to Chatham. All I could learn about him was, that he had gone, probably to London, and had with him—a Carpet Bag.

"I came back to town, by the last train from Blackwall, and made inquiries concerning a Jew passenger with—a Carpet Bag.

"The office was shut up, it being the last train. There were only two or three porters left. Looking after a Jew with a Carpet Bag, on the Blackwall Railway, which was then the highroad to a great Military Depot, was worse than looking after a needle in a hayrick. But it happened that one of these porters had carried, for a certain Jew, to a certain public-house, a certain—Carpet Bag.

"I went to the public-house, but the Jew had only left his luggage there, for a few hours, and had called for it in a cab, and taken it away. I put such questions there, and to the porter, as I thought prudent, and got at this description of—the Carpet Bag.

"It was a bag which had, on one side of it, worked in worsted, a green parrot on a stand. A green parrot on a stand was the means by which to identify that—Carpet Bag.

"I traced Mesheck, by means of this green parrot on a stand, to Cheltenham, to Birmingham, to Liverpool, to the Atlantic Ocean. At Liverpool he was too many for me. He had gone to the United States, and I gave up all thoughts of Mesheck, and likewise of his—Carpet Bag.

"Many months afterwards—near a year afterwards—there was a bank in Ireland robbed of seven thousand pounds by a person of the name of Doctor Dundey, who escaped to America; from which country some of the stolen notes came home. He was supposed to have bought a farm in New Jersey. Under proper management, that estate could be seized and sold, for the benefit of the parties he had defrauded. I was sent off to America for this purpose.

"I landed at Boston. I went on to New York. I found that he had lately changed New York paper-money for New Jersey paper-money, and had banked cash in New Brunswick. To take this Doctor Dundey, it was necessary to entrap him into the State of New York, which required a deal of artifice and trouble. At one time, he couldn't be drawn into an appointment. At another time, he appointed to come to meet me, and a New York officer, on a pretext I made; and then his children had the measles. At last he came, per steamboat, and I took him, and lodged him in a New York prison called the Tombs; which I dare say you know, sir?"

Editorial acknowledgement to that effect.

"I went to the Tombs, on the morning after his capture, to attend the examination before the magistrate. I was passing through the magistrate's private room, when, happening to look round me to take notice of the place, as we generally have a habit of doing, I clapped my eyes, in one corner, on a—Carpet Bag.

"What did I see upon that Carpet Bag, if you'll believe me, but a green parrot on a stand, as large as life!

" 'That Carpet Bag, with the representation of a green parrot on a stand,' said I, 'belongs to an English Jew, name Aaron Mesheck, and to no other man, alive or dead!'

"I give you my word the New York Police Officers were doubled up with surprise.

" 'How did you ever come to know that?' said they.

" 'I think I ought to know that green parrot by this time,' said I; 'for I have had as pretty a dance after that bird, at home, as ever I had, in all my life!' "

"And was it Mesheck's?" we submissively inquired.

"Was it, sir? Of course it was! He was in custody for another offence, in that very identical Tombs, at that very identical time. And, more than that! Some memoranda, relating to the fraud for which I had vainly endeavoured to take him, were found to be, at that moment, lying in that very same individual—Carpet Bag!"

Such are the curious coincidences and such is the peculiar ability, always sharpening and being improved by practice, and always adapting itself to every variety of circumstances, and opposing itself to every new device that perverted ingenuity can invent, for which this important social branch of the public service is remarkable! For ever on the watch, with their wits stretched to the utmost, these officers have, from day to day and year to year, to set themselves against every novelty of trickery and dexterity that the combined imaginations of all the lawless rascals in England can devise, and to keep pace with every such invention that comes out. In the Courts of Justice, the materials of thousands of such stories as we have narrated—often elevated into the marvellous and romantic, by the circumstances of the case—are dryly compressed into the set phrase, "in consequence of information I received, I did so and so." Suspicion was to be directed, by careful inference and deduction, upon the right person; the right person was to be taken, wherever he had gone, or whatever he was doing to avoid detection: he is taken; there he is at the bar; that is enough. From information I, the officer, received, I did it; and, according to the custom in these cases, I say no more.

These games of chess, played with live pieces, are played before small audiences, and are chronicled nowhere. The interest of the game supports the player. Its results are enough for Justice. To compare great things with small, suppose LEVERRIER or ADAMS informing the public that from information he had received he had discovered a new planet; or COLUMBUS informing the public of his day that from information he had received he had discovered a new continent; so the Detectives inform it that they have discovered a new fraud or an old offender, and the process is unknown.

Thus, at midnight, closed the proceedings of our curious and interesting party. But one other circumstance finally wound up the evening, after our Detective guests had left us. One of the sharpest among them, and the officer best acquainted with the Swell Mob, had his pocket picked, going home!

THREE "DETECTIVE" ANECDOTES

I. THE PAIR OF GLOVES

"It's a singler story, sir," said Inspector Wield, of the Detective Police, who, in company with Sergeants Dornton and Mith, paid us another twilight visit, one July evening; "and I've been thinking you might like to know it.

"It's concerning the murder of the young woman, Eliza Grimwood, some years ago, over in the Waterloo Road. She was commonly called The Countess, because of her handsome appearance and her proud way of carrying of herself; and when I saw the poor Countess (I had known her well to speak to), lying dead, with her throat cut, on the floor of her bedroom, you'll believe me that a variety of reflections calculated to make a man rather low in his spirits, came into my head.

"That's neither here nor there. I went to the house the morning after the murder, and examined the body, and made a general observation of the bedroom where it was. Turning down the pillow of the bed with my hand, I found, underneath it, a pair of gloves. A pair of gentleman's dress gloves, very dirty; and inside the lining, the letters Tr, and a cross.

"Well, sir, I took them gloves away, and I showed 'em to the magistrate, over at Union Hall, before whom the case was. He says, 'Wield,' he says, 'there's no doubt this is a discovery that may lead to something very important; and what you have got to do, Wield, is to find out the owner of these gloves.'

"I was of the same opinion, of course, and I went at it immediately. I looked at the gloves pretty narrowly, and it was my opinion that they had been cleaned. There was a smell of sulphur and rosin about 'em, you know, which cleaned gloves usually have, more or less. I took 'em over to a friend of mine at Kennington, who was in that line, and I put it to him. 'What do you say now? Have these gloves been cleaned?' 'These gloves have been cleaned,' says he. 'Have you any idea who cleaned them?' says I. 'Not at all,' says he; 'I've a very distinct idea who *didn't* clean 'em, and that's myself. But I'll tell you what, Wield, there ain't above eight or nine reg'lar glove-cleaners in London,'—there were not, at that time, it seems—'and I think I can give you their addresses, and you may find out, by that means, who did clean 'em.' Accordingly, he gave me the directions, and I went here, and I went there, and I looked up this man, and I looked up that man; but, though they all agreed that the gloves had been cleaned, I couldn't find the man, woman or child, that had cleaned that aforesaid pair of gloves.

"What with this person not being at home, and that person being expected home in the afternoon, and so forth, the inquiry took me three days. On the evening of the third day, coming over Waterloo Bridge from the Surrey side of the river, quite beat, and very much vexed and disappointed, I thought I'd have a shilling's worth of entertainment at the Lyceum Theatre to freshen myself up. So I went into the Pit, at half-price, and I sat myself down next to a very quiet, modest sort of young man. Seeing I was a stranger (which I thought it just as well to appear to be) he told me the names of the actors on the stage, and we got into conversation. When the play was over, we came out together, and I said, 'We've been very companionable and agreeable, and perhaps you wouldn't object to a drain?' 'Well, you're very good,' says he; 'I *shouldn't* object to a drain.' Accordingly, we went to a public-house, near the Theatre, sat ourselves down in a quiet room up-stairs on the first floor, and called for a pint of half-and-half apiece, and a pipe.

"Well, sir, we put our pipes aboard, and we drank our half-and-half, and sat a-talking, very sociably, when the young man says, 'You must excuse me stopping very long,' he says, 'because I'm forced to go home in good time. I must be at work all night.' 'At work all night?' says I. 'You ain't a baker?' 'No,' he says, laughing, 'I ain't a baker.' 'I thought not,' says I, 'you haven't the looks of a baker.' 'No,' says he, 'I'm a glove-cleaner.'

"I never was more astonished in my life, than when I heard them words come out of his lips. 'You're a glove-cleaner, are you?' says I. 'Yes,' he says, 'I am.' 'Then, perhaps,' says I, taking the gloves out of my pocket, 'you can tell me who cleaned this pair of gloves? It's a rum story,' I says. 'I was dining over at Lambeth, the other day, at a free-and-easy—quite promiscuous—with a public company—when some gentleman, left these gloves behind him! Another gentleman and me, you see, we laid a wager of a sovereign, that I wouldn't find out who they belonged to. I've spent as much as seven shillings already, in trying to discover; but, if you could help me, I'd stand another seven and welcome. You see there's Tr and a cross, inside.' '*I* see,' he says. 'Bless you, *I* know these gloves very well! I've seen dozens of pairs belonging to the same party.' 'No?' says I. 'Yes,' says he. 'Then you know who cleaned 'em?' says I. 'Rather so,' says he. 'My father cleaned 'em.'

" 'Where does your father live?' says I. 'Just round the corner,' says the young man, 'near Exeter Street, here. He'll tell you who they belong to, directly.' 'Would you come round with me now?' says I. 'Certainly,' says he, 'but you needn't tell my father that you found me at the play, you know, because he mightn't like it.' 'All right!' We went round to the place, and there we found an old man in a white apron, with two or three daughters, all rubbing and cleaning away at lots of gloves, in a front parlour. 'Oh, Father!' says the young man, 'here's a person been and made a bet about the ownership of a pair of gloves, and I've told him you can settle it.' 'Good evening, sir,' says I to the old gentleman. 'Here's the gloves your son speaks of.

Letters Tʀ, you see, and a cross.' 'Oh yes,' he says, 'I know these gloves very well; I've cleaned dozens of pairs of 'em. They belong to Mr. Trinkle, the great upholsterer in Cheapside.' 'Did you get 'em from Mr. Trinkle, direct,' says I, 'if you'll excuse my asking the question?' 'No,' says he; 'Mr. Trinkle always sends 'em to Mr. Phibbs's, the haberdasher's, opposite his shop, and the haberdasher sends 'em to me.' 'Perhaps *you* wouldn't object to a drain?' says I. 'Not in the least!' says he. So I took the old gentleman out, and had a little more talk with him and his son, over a glass, and we parted ex-cellent friends.

"This was late on a Saturday night. First thing on the Monday morning, I went to the haberdasher's shop, opposite Mr. Trinkle's, the great upholsterer's in Cheapside. 'Mr. Phibbs in the way?' 'My name is Phibbs.' 'Oh! I believe you sent this pair of gloves to be cleaned?' 'Yes, I did, for young Mr. Trinkle over the way. There he is in the shop!' 'Oh! that's him in the shop, is it? Him in the green coat?' 'The same individual.' 'Well, Mr. Phibbs, this is an unpleasant affair; but the fact is, I am Inspector Wield of the Detective Police, and I found these gloves under the pillow of the young woman that was murdered the other day, over in the Waterloo Road.' 'Good Heaven!' says he. 'He's a most respectable young man, and if his father was to hear of it, it would be the ruin of him!' 'I'm very sorry for it,' says I, 'but I must take him into custody.' 'Good Heaven!' says Mr. Phibbs, again; 'can nothing be done!' 'Nothing,' says I. 'Will you allow me to call him over here,' says he, 'that his father may not see it done?' 'I don't object to that,' says I; 'but unfortunately, Mr. Phibbs, I can't allow of any communication between you. If any was attempted, I should have to interfere directly. Perhaps you'll beckon him over here?' Mr. Phibbs went to the door and beckoned, and the young fellow came across the street directly; a smart, brisk young fellow.

" 'Good morning, sir,' says I. 'Good morning, sir,' says he. 'Would you allow me to inquire, sir,' says I, 'if you ever had any acquaintance with a party of the name of Grimwood?' 'Grimwood! Grimwood!' says he. 'No!' 'You know the Waterloo Road?' 'Oh! of course I know the WaterlooRoad!' 'Happen to have heard of a young woman being murdered there?' 'Yes, I read it in the paper, and very sorry I was to read it.' 'Here's a pair of gloves belonging to you, that I found under her pillow the morning afterwards!'

"He was in a dreadful state, sir; a dreadful state! 'Mr. Wield,' he says, 'upon my solemn oath I never was there. I never so much as saw her, to my knowledge, in my life!' 'I am very sorry,' says I. 'To tell you the truth; I don't think you *are* the murderer, but I must take you to Union Hall in a cab. However, I think it's a case of that sort, that, at present, at all events, the magistrate will hear it in private.'

"A private examination took place, and then it came out that this young man was acquainted with a cousin of the unfortunate Eliza Grimwood, and that, calling to see this cousin a day or two before the murder, he left these gloves upon the table. Who should come in, shortly afterwards, but Eliza Grimwood! 'Whose gloves are these?' she says, taking 'em up. 'Those are Mr. Trinkle's gloves,' says her cousin. 'Oh!' says she, 'they are very dirty, and of no use to him, I am sure. I shall take 'em away for my girl to clean the stoves with.' And she put 'em in her pocket. The girl had used 'em to clean the stoves, and, I have no doubt, had left 'em lying on the bedroom mantelpiece, or on the drawers, or somewhere; and her mistress, looking round to see that the room was tidy, had caught 'em up and put 'em under the pillow where I found 'em.

"That's the story, sir."

II. THE ARTFUL TOUCH

"One of the most *beautiful* things that ever was done, perhaps," said Inspector Wield, emphasising the adjective, as preparing us to expect dexterity or ingenuity rather than strong interest, "was a move of Sergeant Witchem's. It was a lovely idea!

"Witchem and me were down at Epsom one Derby Day, waiting at the station for the Swell Mob. As I mentioned, when we were talking about these things before, we are ready at the station when there's races, or an Agricultural Show, or a Chancellor sworn in for an university, or Jenny Lind, or anything of that sort; and as the Swell Mob come down, we send 'em back again by the next train. But some of the Swell Mob, on the occasion of this Derby that I refer to, so far kidded us as to hire a horse and shay; start away from London by Whitechapel, and miles round; come into Epsom from the opposite direction; and go to work, right and left, on the course, while we were waiting for 'em at the Rail. That, however, ain't the point of what I'm going to tell you.

"While Witchem and me were waiting at the station, there comes up one Mr. Tatt; a gentleman formerly in the public line, quite an amateur Detective in his way, and very much respected. 'Holloa, Charley Wield,' he says. 'What are you doing here? On the look out for some of your old friends?' 'Yes, the old move, Mr. Tatt.' 'Come along,' he says, 'you and Witchem, and have a glass of sherry.' 'We can't stir from the place,' says I, 'till the next train comes in; but after that, we will with pleasure.' Mr. Tatt waits, and the train comes in, and then Witchem and me go off with him to the Hotel. Mr. Tatt he's got up quite regardless of expense, for the occasion; and in his shirt-front there's a beautiful diamond prop, cost him fifteen or twenty pound—a very handsome pin indeed. We drink our sherry at the bar, and have had our three or four glasses, when Witchem cries suddenly, 'Look out, Mr. Wield! stand fast!' and a dash is made into the place by the Swell Mob—four of 'em—that have come down as I tell you, and in a moment Mr. Tatt's prop is gone! Witchem, he cuts 'em off at the door, I lay about me as hard as I can, Mr. Tatt shows fight like a good 'un, and there we are, all down together, heads and heels, knocking about on the floor of the bar—perhaps you never see such a scene of confusion! However, we stick to our men (Mr. Tatt being as good as any officer) and we take 'em all, and carry 'em off to the station. The station's full of people, who have been took on the course; and it's a precious piece of work to get 'em secured. However, we do it at last, and we search 'em; but nothing's found upon 'em, and they're locked up; and a pretty state of heat we are in by that time, I assure you!

"I was very blank over it, myself, to think that the prop had been passed away; and I said to Witchem, when we had set 'em to rights, and were cooling ourselves along with Mr. Tatt, 'we don't take much by *this* move, anyway, for nothing's found upon 'em, and it's only the braggadocia,[1] after all.' 'What do you mean, Mr. Wield?' says Witchem. 'Here's the diamond pin!' and in the palm of his hand there it was, safe and sound! 'Why, in the name of wonder,' says me and Mr. Tatt, in astonishment, 'how did you come by that?' 'I'll tell you how I come by it,' says he. 'I saw which of 'em took it; and when we were all down on the floor together, knocking about, I just gave him a little touch on the back of his hand, as I knew his pal would; and he thought it WAS his pal; and gave it me!' It was beautiful, beau-ti-ful!

"Even that was hardly the best of the case, for that chap was tried at the Quarter Sessions at Guildford. You know what Quarter Sessions are, sir. Well, if you'll believe me, while them slow justices were looking over the Acts of Parliament, to see what they could do to him, I'm blowed if he didn't cut out of the dock before their faces! He cut out of the dock, sir, then and there; swam across a river; and got up into a tree to dry himself. In the tree he was took—an old woman having seen him climb up—and Witchem's artful touch transported him!"

III. THE SOFA

"What young men will do, sometimes, to ruin themselves and break their friends' hearts," said Sergeant Dornton, "it's surprising! I had a case at Saint Blank's Hospital which was of this sort. A bad case, indeed, with a bad end!"

"The Secretary, and the House-Surgeon, and the Treasurer, of Saint Blank's Hospital, came to Scotland Yard to give information of numerous robberies having been committed on the students. The students could leave nothing in the pockets of their great-coats, while the great-coats were hanging at the hospital, but it was almost certain to be stolen. Property of various descriptions was constantly being lost; and the gentlemen were naturally uneasy about it, and anxious, for the credit of the institution, that the thief or thieves should be discovered. The case was entrusted to me, and I went to the hospital.

" 'Now, gentlemen,' said I, after we had talked it over; 'I understand this property is usually lost from one room.'

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[1] Three months' imprisonment as reputed thieves.

"Yes, they said. It was.

" 'I should wish, if you please,' said I, 'to see the room.'

"It was a good-sized bare room down-stairs, with a few tables and forms in it, and a row of pegs, all round, for hats and coats.

" 'Next, gentlemen,' said I, 'do you suspect anybody?'

"Yes, they said. They did suspect somebody. They were sorry to say, they suspected one of the porters.

" 'I should like,' said I, 'to have that man pointed out to me, and to have a little time to look after him.'

"He was pointed out, and I looked after him, and then I went back to the hospital, and said, 'Now, gentlemen, it's not the porter. He's, unfortunately for himself, a little too fond of drink, but he's nothing worse. My suspicion is, that these robberies are committed by one of the students; and if you'll put me a sofa into that room where the pegs are—as there's no closet—I think I shall be able to detect the thief. I wish the sofa, if you please, to be covered with chintz, or something of that sort, so that I may lie on my chest, underneath it, without being seen.'

"The sofa was provided, and next day at eleven o'clock, before any of the students came, I went there, with those gentlemen, to get underneath it. It turned out to be one of those old-fashioned sofas with a great cross-beam at the bottom, that would have broken my back in no time if I could ever have got below it. We had quite a job to break all this away in the time; however, I fell to work, and they fell to work, and we broke it out, and made a clear place for me. I got under the sofa, lay down on my chest, took out my knife, and made a convenient hole in the chintz to look through. It was then settled between me and the gentlemen that when the students were all up in the wards, one of the gentlemen should come in, and hang up a great-coat on one of the pegs. And that that great-coat should have, in one of the pockets, a pocket-book containing marked money.

"After I had been there some time, the students began to drop into the room, by ones, and twos, and threes, and to talk about all sorts of things, little thinking there was anybody under the sofa—and then to go up-stairs. At last there came in one who remained until he was alone in the room by himself. A tallish, good-looking young man of one or two and twenty, with a light whisker. He went to a particular hat-peg, took off a good hat that was hanging there, tried it on, hung his own hat in its place, and hung that hat on another peg, nearly opposite to me. I then felt quite certain that he was the thief, and would come back by-and-by.

"When they were all up-stairs, the gentleman came in with the great-coat. I showed him where to hang it, so that I might have a good view of it; and he went away; and I lay under the sofa on my chest, for a couple of hours or so, waiting.

"At last, the same young man came down. He walked across the room, whistling—stopped and listened—took another walk and whistled—stopped again, and listened—then began to go regularly round the pegs, feeling in the pockets of all the coats, When he came to THE great-coat, and felt the pocket-book, he was so eager and so hurried that he broke the strap in tearing it open. As he began to put the money in his pocket, I crawled out from under the sofa, and his eyes met mine.

"My face, as you may perceive, is brown now, but it was pale at that time, my health not being good; and looked as long as a horse's. Besides which, there was a great draught of air from the door, underneath the sofa, and I had tied a handkerchief round my head; so what I looked like, altogether, I don't know. He turned blue—literally blue—when he saw me crawling out, and I couldn't feel surprised at it.

" 'I am an officer of the Detective Police,' said I, 'and have been lying here, since you first came in this morning. I regret, for the sake of yourself and your friends, that you should have done what you have; but this case is complete. You have the pocket-book in your hand and the money upon you; and I must take you into custody!"

"It was impossible to make out any case in his behalf, and on his trial he pleaded guilty. How or when he got the means I don't know; but while he was awaiting his sentence, he poisoned himself in Newgate."

We inquired of this officer, on the conclusion of the foregoing anecdote, whether the time appeared long, or short, when he lay in that constrained position under the sofa?

"Why, you see, sir," he replied, "if he hadn't come in, the first time, and I had not been quite sure he was the thief, and would return, the time would have seemed long. But, as it was, I being dead certain of my man, the time seemed pretty short."

OUR HONOURABLE FRIEND

We are delighted to find that he has got in! Our honourable friend is triumphantly returned to serve in the next Parliament. He is the honourable member for Verbosity—the best represented place in England.

Our honourable friend has issued an address of congratulation to the Electors, which is worthy of that noble constituency, and is a very pretty piece of composition. In electing him, he says, they have covered themselves with glory, and England has been true to herself. (In his preliminary address he had remarked, in a poetical quotation of great rarity, that nought could make us rue, if England to herself did prove but true.)

Our honourable friend delivers a prediction, in the same document, that the feeble minions of a faction will never hold up their heads any more; and that the finger of scorn will point at them in their dejected state, through countless ages of time. Further, that the hireling tools that would destroy the sacred bulwarks of our nationality are unworthy of the name of Englishman; and that so long as the sea shall roll around our ocean-girded isle, so long his motto shall be, No surrender. Certain dogged persons of low principles and no intellect, have disputed whether anybody knows who the minions are, or what the faction is, or which are the hireling tools and which the sacred bulwarks, or what it is that is never to be surrendered, and if not, why not? But, our honourable friend the member for Verbosity knows all about it.

Our honourable friend has sat in several parliaments, and given bushels of votes. He is a man of that profundity in the matter of vote-giving, that you never know what he means. When he seems to be voting pure white, he may be in reality voting jet black. When he says Yes, it is just as likely as not—or rather more so—that he means No. This is the statesmanship of our honourable friend. It is in this that he differs from mere unparliamentary men. *You* may not know what he meant then, or what he means now; but our honourable friend knows, and did from the first know, both what he meant then, and what he means now; and when he said he didn't mean it then, he did in fact say that he means it now. And if you mean to say that you did not then, and do not now, know what he did mean then, or does mean now, our honourable friend will be glad to receive an explicit declaration from you whether you are prepared to destroy the sacred bulwarks of our nationality.

Our honourable friend, the member for Verbosity, has this great attribute, that he always means something, and always means the same thing. When he came down to the House and mournfully boasted in his place, as an individual member of the assembled Commons of this great and happy country, that he could lay his hand upon his heart, and solemnly declare that no consideration on earth should induce him, at any time or under any circumstances, to go as far north as Berwick-upon-Tweed; and when he nevertheless, next year, did go to Berwick-upon-Tweed, and even beyond it, to Edinburgh, he had one single meaning, one and indivisible. And God forbid (our honourable friend says) that he should waste another argument upon the man who professes that he cannot understand it! "I do NOT, gentlemen," said our honourable friend, with indignant emphasis and amid great cheering, on one such public occasion. "I do NOT, gentlemen, I am free to confess, envy the feelings of that man whose mind is so constituted as that he can hold such language to me, and yet lay his head upon his pillow, claiming to be a native of that land,

Whose march is o'er the mountain-wave,
Whose home is on the deep!"

(Vehement cheering, and man expelled.)

When our honourable friend issued his preliminary address to the constituent body of Verbosity on the occasion of one particular glorious triumph, it was supposed by some of his enemies that even he would be placed in a situation of difficulty by the following comparatively trifling conjunction of circumstances. The dozen noblemen and gentlemen whom our honourable friend supported had "come in" expressly to do a certain thing. Now, four of the dozen said, at a certain place, that they didn't mean to do that thing, and had never meant to do it; another four of the dozen said, at another certain place, that they did mean to do that thing, and had always meant to do it; two of the remaining four said, at two other certain places, that they meant to do half of that thing (but differed about which half), and to do a variety of nameless wonders instead of the other half; and one of the remaining two declared that the thing itself was dead and buried, while the other as strenuously protested that it was alive and kicking. It was admitted that the parliamentary genius of our honourable friend would be quite able to reconcile such small discrepancies as these; but there remained the additional difficulty that each of the twelve made entirely different statements at different places, and that all the twelve called everything visible and invisible, sacred and profane, to witness that they were a perfectly impregnable phalanx of unanimity. This, it was apprehended, would be a stumbling-block to our honourable friend.

The difficulty came before our honourable friend in this way. He went down to Verbosity to meet his free and independent constituents, and to render an account (as he informed them in the local papers) of the trust they had confided to his hands—that trust which it was one of the proudest privileges of an Englishman to possess—that trust which it was the proudest privilege of an Englishman to hold. It may be mentioned as a proof of the great general interest attaching to the contest, that a Lunatic whom nobody employed or knew, went down to Verbosity with several thousand pounds in gold, determined to give the whole away—which he actually did; and that all the publicans opened their houses for nothing. Likewise, several fighting men, and a patriotic group of burglars sportively armed with life-preservers, proceeded (in barouches and very drunk) to the scene of action at their own expense; these children of nature having conceived a warm attachment to our honourable friend, and intending, in their artless manner, to testify it by knocking the voters in the opposite interest on the head.

Our honourable friend being come into the presence of his constituents, and having professed with great suavity that he was delighted to see his good friend Tipkisson there, in his working-dress—his good friend Tipkisson being an inveterate saddler, who always opposes him, and for whom he has a mortal hatred—made them a brisk, ginger beery sort of speech, in which he showed them how the dozen noblemen and gentlemen had (in exactly ten days from their coming in) exercised a surprisingly beneficial effect on the whole financial condition of Europe, had altered the state of the exports and imports for the current half-year, had prevented the drain of gold, and made all that matter right about the glut of the raw material, and had restored all sorts of balances with which the superseded noblemen and gentlemen had played the deuce—and all this, with wheat at so much a quarter, gold at so much an ounce, and the Bank of England discounting good bills at so much per cent! He might be asked, he observed in a peroration of great power, what were his principles? His principles were what they always had been. His principles were written in the countenances of the lion and unicorn; were stamped indelibly upon the royal shield which those grand animals supported, and upon the free words of fire which that shield bore. His principles were, Britannia and her sea-king trident! His principles were, commercial prosperity coexistently with perfect and profound agricultural contentment; but short of this he would never stop. His principles were these,—with the addition of his colours nailed to the mast, every man's heart in the right place, every man's eye open, every man's hand ready, every man's mind on the alert. His principles were these, concurrently with a general revision of something—speaking generally—and a possible readjustment of something else, not to be mentioned more particularly. His principles, to sum up all in a word, were, Hearths and Altars, Labour and Capital, Crown and Sceptre, Elephant and Castle. And now, if his good friend Tipkisson required any further explanation from him, he (our honourable friend) was there, willing and ready to give it.

Tipkisson, who all this time had stood conspicuous in the crowd, with his arms folded and his eyes intently fastened on our honourable friend: Tipkisson, who throughout our honourable friend's address had not relaxed a muscle of his visage, but had stood there, wholly unaffected by the torrent of eloquence, an object of contempt and scorn to mankind (by which we mean, of course, to the supporters of our honourable friend); Tipkisson now said that he was a plain man (Cries of "You are indeed!"), and that what he wanted to know was, what our honourable friend and the dozen noblemen and gentlemen were driving at?

Our honourable friend immediately replied, "At the illimitable perspective."

It was considered by the whole assembly that this happy statement of our honourable friend's political views ought, immediately, to have settled Tipkisson's business and covered him with confusion; but that implacable person, regardless of the execrations that were heaped upon him from all sides (by which we mean, of course, from our honourable friend's side), persisted in retaining an unmoved countenance, and obstinately retorted that if our honourable friend meant that, he wished to know what *that* meant?

It was in repelling this most objectionable and indecent opposition that our honourable friend displayed his highest qualifications for the representation of Verbosity. His warmest supporters present, and those who were best acquainted with his generalship, supposed that the moment was come when he would fall back upon the sacred bulwarks of our nationality. No such thing. He replied thus: "My good friend Tipkisson, gentlemen, wishes to know what I mean when he asks me what we are driving at, and when I candidly tell him, at the illimitable perspective, he wishes (if I understand him) to know what I mean?" "I do!" says Tipkisson, amid cries of "Shame" and "Down with him." "Gentlemen," says our honourable friend, "I will indulge my good friend Tipkisson by telling him both what I mean and what I don't mean. (Cheers and cries of "Give it him!") Be it known to him then, and to all whom it may concern, that I do mean altars, hearths, and homes, and that I don't mean mosques and Mohammedanism!" The effect of this home-thrust was terrific. Tipkisson (who is a Baptist) was hooted down and hustled out, and has ever since been regarded as a Turkish Renegade who contemplates an early pilgrimage to Mecca. Nor was he the only discomfited man. The charge, while it stuck to him, was magically transferred to our honourable friend's opponent, who was represented in an immense variety of placards as a firm believer in Mahomet ; the men of Verbosity were asked to choose between our honourable friend and the Bible, and our honourable friend's opponent and the Koran. They decided for our honourable friend, and rallied round the illimitable perspective.

It has been claimed for our honourable friend, with much appearance of reason, that he was the first to bend sacred matters to electioneering tactics. However this may be, the fine precedent was undoubtedly set in a Verbosity election: and it is certain that our honourable friend (who was a disciple of Brahma in his youth, and was a Buddhist when we had the honour of travelling with him a few years ago) always professes in public more anxiety than the whole Bench of Bishops, regarding the theological and doxological opinions of every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom.

As we began by saying that our honourable friend has got in again at this last election, and that we are delighted to find that he has got in, so we will conclude. Our honourable friend cannot come in for Verbosity too often. It is a good sign; it is a great example. It is to men like our honourable friend, and to contests like those from which he comes triumphant, that we are mainly indebted for that ready interest in politics, that fresh enthusiasm in the discharge of the duties of citizenship, that ardent desire to rush to the poll, at present so manifest throughout England. When the contest lies (as it sometimes does) between two such men as our honourable friend, it stimulates the finest emotions of our nature, and awakens the highest admiration of which our heads and hearts are capable.

It is not too much to predict that our honourable friend will be always at his post in the ensuing session. Whatever the question be, or whatever the form of its discussion; address to the crown, election petition, expenditure of the public money, extension of the public suffrage, education, crime; in the whole house, in committee of the whole house, in select committee; in every parliamentary discussion of every subject, everywhere: the Honourable Member for Verbosity will most certainly be found.

OUR SCHOOL

We went to look at it, only this last Midsummer, and found that the Railway had cut it up root and branch. A great trunk-line had swallowed the playground, sliced away the schoolroom, and pared off the corner of the house: which, thus curtailed of its proportions, presented itself, in a green stage of stucco, profilewise towards the road, like a forlorn flat-iron without a handle, standing on end.

It seems as if our schools were doomed to be the sport of change. We have faint recollections of a Preparatory Day-School, which we have sought in vain, and which must have been pulled down to make a new street, ages ago. We have dim impressions, scarcely amounting to a belief, that it was over a dyer's shop. We know that you went up steps to it; that you frequently grazed your knees in doing so; that you generally got your leg over the scraper, in trying to scrape the mud off a very unsteady little shoe. The mistress of the Establishment holds no place in our memory; but rampant on one eternal door-mat, in an eternal entry long and narrow, is a puffy pug-dog, with a personal animosity towards us, who triumphs over Time. The bark of that baleful Pug, a certain radiating way he had of snapping at our undefended legs, the ghastly grinning of his moist black muzzle and white teeth, and the insolence of his crisp tail curled like a pastoral crook, all live and flourish. From an otherwise unaccountable association of him with a fiddle, we conclude that he was of French extraction, and his name *Fidèle*. He belonged to some female, chiefly inhabiting a back-parlour, whose life to us appears to have been consumed in sniffing, and in wearing a brown beaver bonnet. For her, he would sit up and balance cake upon his nose, and not eat it until twenty had been counted. To the best of our belief we were once called in to witness this performance; when, unable, even in his milder moments, to endure our presence, he instantly made at us, cake and all.

Why a something in mourning, called "Miss Frost," should still connect itself with our preparatory school, we are unable to say. We retain no impression of the beauty of Miss Frost—if she were beautiful; or of the mental fascinations of Miss Frost—if she were accomplished; yet her name and her black dress hold an enduring place in our remembrance. An equally impersonal boy, whose name has long since shaped itself unalterably into "Master Mawls," is not to be dislodged from our brain. Retaining no vindictive feeling towards Mawls—no feeling whatever, indeed—we infer that neither he nor we can have loved Miss Frost. Our first impression of Death and Burial is associated with this formless pair. We all three nestled awfully in a corner one wintry day, when the wind was blowing shrill, with Miss Frost's pinafore over our heads; and Miss Frost told us in a whisper about somebody being "screwed down." It is the only distinct recollection we preserve of these impalpable creatures, except a suspicion that the manners of Master Mawls were susceptible of much improvement. Generally speaking, we may oberve that whenever we see a child intently occupied with its nose, to the exclusion of all other subjects of interest, our mind reverts, in a flash, to Master Mawls.

But the School that was Our School before the Railroad came and overthrew it, was quite another sort of place. We were old enough to be put into Virgil when we went there, and to get Prizes for a variety of polishing on which the rust has long accumulated. It was a School of some celebrity in its neighbourhood—nobody could have said why—and we had the honour to attain and hold the eminent position of first boy. The master was supposed among us to know nothing, and one of the ushers was supposed to know everything. We are still inclined to think the first-named supposition perfectly correct.

We have a general idea that its subject had been in the leather trade, and had bought us—meaning Our School—of another proprietor who was immensely learned. Whether this belief had any real foundation, we are not likely ever to know now. The only branches of education with which he showed the least acquaintance, were, ruling and corporally punishing. He was always ruling ciphering-books with a bloated mahogany ruler, or smiting the palms of offenders with the same diabolical instrument, or viciously drawing a pair of pantaloons tight with one of his large hands, and caning the wearer with the other. We have no doubt whatever that this occupation was the principal solace of his existence.

A profound respect for money pervaded Our School, which was, of course, derived from its Chief. We remember an idiotic goggle-eyed boy, with a big head and half-crowns without end, who suddenly appeared as a parlour-boarder, and was rumoured to have come by sea from some mysterious part of the earth where his parents rolled in gold. He was usually called "Mr." by the Chief, and was said to feed in the parlour on steaks and gravy; likewise to drink currant wine. And he openly stated that if rolls and coffee were ever denied him at breakfast, he would write home to that unknown part of the globe from which he had come, and cause himself to be recalled to the regions of gold. He was put into no form or class, but learnt alone, as little as he liked—and he liked very little—and there was a belief among us that this was because he was too wealthy to be "taken down." His special treatment, and our vague association of him with the sea, and with storms, and sharks, and Coral Reefs occasioned the wildest legends to be circulated as his history. A tragedy in blank verse was written on the subject—if our memory does not deceive us, by the hand that now chronicles these recollections—in which his father figured as Pirate, and was shot for a voluminous catalogue of atrocities: first imparting to his wife the secret of the cave in which his wealth was stored, and from which his only son's half-crowns now issued. Dumbledon (the boy's name) was represented as "yet unborn" when his brave father met his fate; and the despair and grief of Mrs. Dumbledon at that calamity was movingly shadowed forth as having weakened the parlour-boarder's mind. This production was received with great favour, and was twice performed with closed doors in the dining-room. But it got wind, and was seized as libellous, and brought the unlucky poet into severe affliction. Some two years afterwards, all of a sudden one day, Dumbledon vanished. It was whispered that the Chief himself had taken him down to the Docks, and re-shipped him for the Spanish Main; but nothing certain was ever known about his disappearance. At this hour, we cannot thoroughly disconnect him from California.

Our School was rather famous for mysterious pupils. There was another—a heavy young man, with a large double-cased silver watch, and a fat knife the handle of which was a perfect tool-box—who unaccountably appeared one day at a special desk of his own, erected close to that of the Chief, with whom he held familiar converse. He lived in the parlour and went out for his walks, and never took the least notice of us—even of us, the first boy—unless to give us a deprecatory kick, or grimly to take our hat off and throw it away, when he encountered us out of doors, which unpleasant ceremony he always performed as he passed—not even condescending to stop for the purpose. Some of us believed that the classical attainments of this phenomenon were terrific, but that his penmanship and arithmetic were defective, and he had come there to mend them; others, that he was going to set up a school, and had paid the Chief "twenty-five pound down," for leave to see Our School at work. The gloomier spirits even said that he was going to buy us; against which contingency, conspiracies were set on foot for a general defection and running away. However, he never did that. After staying for a quarter, during which period, though closely observed, he was never seen to do anything but make pens out of quills, write small hand in a secret portfolio, and punch the point of the sharpest blade in his knife into his desk all over it, he too disappeared, and his place knew him no more.

There was another boy, a fair, meek boy, with a delicate complexion and rich curling hair, who, we found out, or thought we found out (we have no idea now, and probably had none then, on what grounds, but it was confidentially revealed from mouth to mouth), was the son of a Viscount who had deserted his lovely mother. It was understood that if he had his rights, he would be worth twenty thousand a year. And that if his mother ever met his father, she would shoot him with a silver pistol, which she carried, always loaded to the muzzle, for that purpose. He was a very suggestive topic. So was a young Mulatto, who was always believed (though very amiable) to have a dagger about him somewhere. But we think they were both outshone, upon the whole, by another boy who claimed to have been born on the twenty-ninth of February, and to have only one birthday in five years. We suspect this to have been a fiction—

but he lived upon it all the time he was at Our School.

The principal currency of Our School was slate pencil. It had some inexplicable value, that was never ascertained, never reduced to a standard. To have a great hoard of it was somehow to be rich. We used to bestow it in charity, and confer it as a precious boon upon our chosen friends. When the holidays were coming, contributions were solicited for certain boys whose relatives were in India, and who were appealed for under the generic name of "Holiday-stoppers,"—appropriate marks of remembrance that should enliven and cheer them in their homeless state. Personally, we always contributed these tokens of sympathy in the form of slate pencil, and always felt that it would be a comfort and a treasure to them.

Our School was remarkable for white mice. Red-polls, linnets, and even canaries, were kept in desks, drawers, hat-boxes, and other strange refuges for birds; but white mice were the favourite stock. The boys trained the mice much better than the masters trained the boys. We recall one white mouse, who lived in the cover of a Latin dictionary, who ran up ladders, drew Roman chariots, shouldered muskets, turned wheels, and even made a very creditable appearance on the stage as the Dog of Montargis. He might have achieved greater things, but for having the misfortune to mistake his way in a triumphal procession to the Capitol, when he fell into a deep inkstand, and was dyed black and drowned. The mice were the occasion of some most ingenious engineering, in the construction of their houses and instruments of performance. The famous one belonged to a company of proprietors, some of whom have since made Railroads, Engines, and Telegraphs; the chairman has erected mills and bridges in New Zealand.

The usher at Our School, who was considered to know everything as opposed to the Chief, who was considered to know nothing, was a bony, gentle-faced, clerical-looking young man in rusty black. It was whispered that he was sweet upon one of Maxby's sisters (Maxby lived close by, and was a day pupil), and further that he "favoured Maxby." As we remember, he taught Italian to Maxby's sisters on half-holidays. He once went to the play with them, and wore a white waistcoat and a rose: which was considered among us equivalent to a declaration. We were of opinion on that occasion, that to the last moment he expected Maxby's father to ask him to dinner at five o'clock, and therefore neglected his own dinner at half-past one, and finally got none. We exaggerated in our imaginations the extent to which he punished Maxby's father's cold meat at supper; and we agreed to believe that he was elevated with wine and water when he came home. But we all liked him; for he had a good knowledge of boys, and would have made it a much better school if he had had more power. He was writing master, mathematical master, English master, made out the bills, mended the pens, and did all sorts of things. He divided the little boys with the Latin master (they were smuggled through their rudimentary books, at odd times when there was nothing else to do), and he always called at parents' houses to inquire after sick boys, because he had gentlemanly manners. He was rather musical, and on some remote quarter-day had bought an old trombone; but a bit of it was lost, and it made the most extraordinary sounds when he sometimes triedto play it of an evening. His holidays never began (on account of the bills) until long after ours; but in the summer vacations he used to take pedestrian excursions with a knapsack; and at Christmas time he went to see his father at Chipping Norton, who we all said (on no authority) was a dairy-fed pork-butcher. Poor fellow! He was very low all day on Maxby's sister's wedding-day, and afterwards was thought to favour Maxby more than ever, though he had been expected to spite him. He has been dead these twenty years. Poor fellow!

Our remembrance of Our Schools presents the Latin master as a colourless doubled-up near-sighted man with a crutch, who was always putting onions into his ears for deafness, and always disclosing ends of flannel under all his garments, and almost always applying a ball of pocket-handkerchief to some part of his face with a screwing action round and round. He was a very good scholar, and took great pains where he saw intelligence and a desire to learn: otherwise, perhaps not. Our memory presents him (unless teased into a passion) with as little energy as colour—as having been worried and tormented into monotonous feebleness—as having had the best part of his life ground out of him in a Mill of boys. We remember with terror how he fell asleep one sultry afternoon with the little smuggled class before him, and awoke not when the footstep of the Chief fell heavy on the floor; how the Chief aroused him, in the midst of a dread silence, and said, "Mr. Blinkins, are you ill, sir?" how he blushingly replied, "Sir, rather so"; how the Chief retorted with severity, "Mr. Blinkins, this is no place to be ill in" (which was very, very true), and walked back solemn as the ghost in Hamlet, until, catching a wandering eye, he caned that boy for inattention, and happily expressed his feelings towards the Latin master through the medium of a substitute.

There was a fat little dancing-master who used to come in a gig, and taught the more advanced among us hornpipes (as an accomplishment in great social demand in after life); and there was a brisk little French master who used to come in the sunniest weather, with a handless umbrella, and to whom the Chief was always polite, because (as we believed), if the Chief offended him, he would instantly address the Chief in French, and for ever confound him before the boys with his inability to understand or reply.

There was, besides, a serving man whose name was Phil. Our retrospective glance presents Phil as a shipwrecked carpenter, cast away upon the desert island of a school, and carrying into practice an ingenious inkling of many trades. He mended whatever was broken, and made whatever was wanted. He was general glazier, among other things, and mended all the broken windows—at the prime cost (as was darkly rumoured among us) of ninepence, for every square charged three-and-six to parents. We had a high opinion of his mechanical genius, and generally held that the Chief "knew something bad of him," and on pain of divulgence enforced Phil to be his bondsman. We particularly remember that Phil had a sovereign contempt for learning: which engenders in us a respect for his sagacity, as it implies his accurate observation of the relative positions of the Chief and the ushers. He was an impenetrable man, who waited at table between whiles, and throughout "the half" kept the boxes in severe custody. He was morose, even to the Chief, and never smiled, except at breaking-up, when, in acknowledgment of the toast, "Success to Phil! Hooray!" he would slowly carve a grin out of his wooden face, where it would remain until we were all gone. Nevertheless, one time when we had the scarlet fever in the school, Phil nursed all the sick boys of his own accord, and was like a mother to them.

There was another school not far off, and of course Our School could have nothing to say to that school. It is mostly the way with schools, whether of boys or men. Well! the railway has swallowed up ours, and the locomotives now run smoothly over its ashes.

So fades and languishes, grows dim and dies,
All that this world is proud of,

—and is not proud of, too. It had little reason to be proud of Our School, and has done much better since in that way, and will do far better yet.

OUR VESTRY

We have the glorious privilege of being always in hot water if we like. We are a shareholder in a Great Parochial British Joint Stock Bank of Balderdash. We have a Vestry in our borough, and can vote for a vestryman—might even *be* a vestryman, mayhap, if we were inspired by a lofty and noble ambition. Which we are not.

Our Vestry is a deliberative assembly of the utmost dignity and importance. Like the Senate of ancient Rome, its awful gravity overpowers (or ought to overpower) barbarian visitors. It sits in the Capitol (we mean in the capital building erected for it), chiefly on Saturdays, and shakes the earth to its centre with the echoes of its thundering eloquence, in a Sunday paper.

To get into this Vestry in the eminent capacity of Vestryman, gigantic efforts are made, and Herculean exertions used. It is made manifest to the dullest capacity at every election, that if we reject Snozzle we are done for, and that if we fail to bring in Blunderbooze at the top of the poll, we are unworthy of the dearest rights of Britons. Flaming placards are rife on all the dead walls in the borough. public-houses hang out banners, hackney-cabs burst into full-grown flowers of type, and everybody is, or should be, in a paroxysm of anxiety.

At these momentous crises of the national fate, we are much assisted in our deliberations by two eminent volunteers; one of whom subscribes himself A Fellow Parishioner, the other, A Rate-Payer. Who they are, or what they are, or where they are, nobody knows; but whatever one asserts, the other contradicts. They are both voluminous writers, indicting more epistles than Lord Chesterfield in a single week; and the greater part of their feelings are too big for utterance in anything less than capital letters. They require the additional aid of whole rows of notes of admiration, like balloons, to point their generous indignation; and they sometimes communicate a crushing severity to stars. As thus:

MEN OF MOONEYMOUNT.

Is it, or is it not, a * * * to saddle the parish with a debt of £2,745 6*s*. 9*d*., yet claim to be a RIGID ECONOMIST ?

Is it, or is it not, a * * * to state as a fact what is proved to be *both a moral and a* PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY ?

Is it, or is it not, a * * * to call £2,745 6*s* 9*d*. nothing; and nothing, something?

Do you, or do you *not* want a * * * TO REPRESENT YOU IN THE VESTRY?

Your consideration of these questions is recommended to you by

A FELLOW PARISHIONER.

It was to this important public document that one of our first orators, MR. MAGG (of Little Winkling Street), adverted, when he opened the great debate of the fourteenth of November by saying "Sir, I hold in my hand an anonymous slander"—and when the interruption, with which he was at that point assailed by the opposite faction, gave rise to that memorable discussion on a point of order which will ever be remembered with interest by constitutional assemblies. In the animated debate to which we refer, no fewer than thirty-seven gentlemen, many of them of great eminence, including MR. WIGSBY (of Chumbledon Square), were seen upon their legs at one time; and it was on the same great occasion that DOGGINSON—regarded in our Vestry as "a regular John Bull": we believe, in consequence of his having always made up his mind on every subject without knowing anything about it—informed another gentleman of similar principles on the opposite side, that if he "cheek'd him," he would resort to the extreme measure of knocking his blessed head off.

This was a great occasion. But our Vestry shines habitually. In asserting its own pre-eminence, for instance, it is very strong. On the least provocation, or on none, it will be clamorous to know whether it is to be "dictated to," or "trampled on," or "ridden over rough-shod." Its great watchword is Self-government. That is to say, supposing our Vestry to favour any little harmless disorder like Typhus Fever, and supposing the Government of the country to be, by any accident, in such ridiculous hands, as that any of its authorities should consider it a duty to object to Typhus Fever—obviously an unconstitutional objection—then, our Vestry cuts in with a terrible manifesto about Self-government, and claims its independent right to have as much Typhus Fever as pleases itself. Some absurd and dangerous persons have represented, on the other hand, that though our Vestry may be able to "beat the bounds" of its own parish, it may not be able to beat the bounds of its own diseases; which (says they) spread over the whole land, in an ever-expanding circle of waste, and misery, and death, and widowhood, and orphanage, and desolation. But our Vestry makes short work of any such fellows as these.

It was our Vestry—pink of Vestries as it is—that in support of its favourite principle took the celebrated ground of denying the existence of the last pestilence that raged in England, when the pestilence was raging at the Vestry doors. Dogginson said it was plums; Mr. Wigsby (of Chumbledon Square) said it was oysters; Mr. Magg (of Little Winkling Street), said, amid great cheering, it was the newspapers. The noble indignation of our Vestry with that un-English institution the Board of Health, under those circumstances, yields one of the finest passages in its history. It wouldn't hear of rescue. Like Mr. Joseph Miller's Frenchman, it would be drowned and nobody should save it. Transported beyond grammar by its kindled ire, it spoke in unknown tongues, and vented unintelligible bellowings, more like an ancient oracle than the modern oracle it is admitted on all hands to be. Rare exigencies produce rare things; and even our Vestry, new hatched to the woful time, came forth a greater goose than ever.

But this, again, was a special occasion. Our Vestry, at more ordinary periods, demands its meed of praise.

Our Vestry is eminently parliamentary. Playing at Parliament is its favourite game. It is even regarded by some of its members as a chapel of ease to the House of Commons: a Little Go to be passed first. It has its strangers' gallery, and its reported debates (see the Sunday paper before mentioned), and our Vestrymen are in and out of order, and on and off their legs, and above all are transcendantly quarrelsome, after the pattern of the real original.

Our Vestry being assembled, Mr. Magg never begs to trouble Mr. Wigsby with a simple inquiry. He knows better than that. Seeing the honourable gentleman, associated in their minds with Chumbledon Square, in his place, he wishes to ask that honourable gentleman what the intentions of himself, and those with whom he acts, may be, on the subject of the paving of the district known as Piggleum Buildings? Mr. Wigsby replies (with his eye on next Sunday's paper) that in reference to the question which has been put to him by the honourable gentleman opposite, he must take leave to say, that if that honourable gentleman had had the courtesy to give him notice of that question, he (Mr. Wigsby) would have consulted with his colleagues in reference to the advisability, in the present state of the discussions on the new paving-rate, of answering that question. But, as the honourable gentleman has NOT had the courtesy to give him notice of that question (great cheering from the Wigsby interest), he must decline to give the honourable gentleman the satisfaction he requires. Mr. Magg, instantly rising to retort, is received with loud cries of "Spoke!" from the Wigsby interest, and with cheers from the Magg side of the house. Moreover, five gentlemen rise to order, and one of them, in revenge for being taken no notice of, petrifies the assembly by moving that this Vestry do now adjourn; but is persuaded to withdraw that awful proposal, in consideration of its tremendous consequences if persevered in. Mr. Magg, for the purpose of being heard, then begs to move, that you, sir, do now pass to the order of the day; and takes that opportunity of saying, that if an honourable gentleman whom he has in his eye, and will not demean himself by more particularly naming (oh, oh, and cheers), supposes that he is to be put down by clamour, that honourable gentleman—however supported he may be, through thick and thin, by a Fellow Parishioner, with whom he is well acquainted (cheers and counter-cheers, Mr. Magg being invariably backed by the Rate-Payer)—will find himself mistaken. Upon this, twenty members of our Vestry speak in succession concerning what the two great men have meant, until it appears, after an hour and twenty minutes, that neither of them meant anything. Then our Vestry begins business.

We have said that, after the pattern of the real original, our Vestry in playing at Parliament is transcendantly quarrelsome. It enjoys a personal altercation above all things. Perhaps the most redoubtable case of this kind we have ever had—though we have had so many that it is difficult to decide—was that on which the last extreme solemnities passed between Mr. Tiddypot (of Gumption House) and Captain Banger (of Wilderness Walk).

In an adjourned debate on the question whether water could be regarded in the light of a necessary of life; respecting which there were great differences of opinion, and many shades of sentiment; Mr. Tiddypot, in a powerful burst of eloquence against that hypothesis, frequently made use of the expression that such and such a rumour had "reached his ears." Captain Banger, following him, and holding that, for purposes of ablution and refreshment, a pint of water per diem was necessary for every adult of the lower classes, and half a pint for every child, cast ridicule upon his address in a sparkling speech, and concluded by saying that instead of those rumours having reached the ears of the honourable gentleman, he rather thought the honourable gentleman's ears must have reached the rumours, in consequence of their well-known length. Mr. Tiddypot immediately rose, looked the honourable and gallant gentleman full in the face, and left the Vestry.

The excitement, at this moment painfully intense, was heightened to an acute degree when Captain Banger rose, and also left the Vestry. After a few moments of profound silence—one of those breathless pauses never to be forgotten—Mr. Chib (of Tucket's Terrace, and the father of the Vestry) rose. He said that words and looks had passed in that assembly, replete with consequences which every feeling mind must deplore. Time pressed. The sword was drawn, and while he spoke the scabbard might be thrown away. He moved that those honourable gentlemen who had left the Vestry be recalled, and required to pledge themselves upon their honour that this affair should go no farther. The motion being by a general union of parties unanimously agreed to (for everybody wanted to have the belligerents there, instead of out of sight: which was no fun at all), Mr. Magg was deputed to recover Captain Banger, and Mr. Chib himself to go in search of Mr. Tiddypot. The Captain was found in a conspicuous position, surveying the passing omnibuses from the top step of the front-door immediately adjoining the beadle's box; Mr. Tiddypot made a desperate attempt at resistance, but was overpowered by Mr. Chib (a remarkably hale old gentleman of eighty-two), and brought back in safety.

Mr. Tiddypot and the Captain being restored to their places, and glaring on each other, were called upon by the chair to abandon all homicidal intentions, and give the Vestry an assurance that they did so. Mr. Tiddypot remained profoundly silent. The Captain likewise remained profoundly silent, saving that he was observed by those around him to fold his arms like Napoleon Buonaparte, and to snort in his breathing—actions but too expressive of gunpowder.

The most intense emotion now prevailed. Several members clustered in remonstrance round the Captain, and several round Mr. Tiddypot; but both were obdurate. Mr. Chib then presented himself amid tremendous cheering, and said, that not to shrink from the discharge of his painful duty, he must now move that both honourable gentlemen be taken into custody by the beadle, and conveyed to the nearest police-office, there to be held to bail. The union of parties still continuing, the motion was seconded by Mr. Wigsby—on all usual occasions Mr. Chib's opponent—and rapturously carried with only one dissentient voice. This was Dogginson's, who said from his place "Let 'em fight it out with fistes"; but whose coarse remark was received as it merited.

The beadle now advanced along the floor of the Vestry, and beckoned with his cocked hat to both members. Every breath was suspended. To say that a pin might have been heard to fall, would be feebly to express the all-absorbing interest and silence. Suddenly, enthusiastic cheering broke out from every side of the Vestry. Captain Banger had risen—being, in fact, pulled up by a friend on either side, and poked up by a friend behind.

The Captain said, in a deep determined voice, that he had every respect for that Vestry and every respect for that chair; that he also respected the honourable gentleman of Gumption House; but that he respected his honour more. Hereupon the Captain sat down, leaving the whole Vestry much affected. Mr. Tiddypot instantly rose, and was received with the same encouragement. He likewise said—and the exquisite art of this orator communicated to the observation an air of freshness and novelty—that he too had every respect for that Vestry; that he too had every respect for that chair. That he too respected the honourable and gallant gentleman of Wilderness Walk; but that he too respected his honour more. "Hows'ever," added the distinguished Vestryman, "if the honourable or gallant gentleman's honour is never more doubted and damaged than it is by me, he's all right." Captain Banger immediately started up again, and said that after those observations, involving as they did ample concession to his honour without compromising the honour of that honourable gentleman, he would be wanting in honour as well as in generosity, if he did not at once repudiate all intention of wounding the honour of the honourable gentleman, or saying anything dishonourable to his honourable feelings. These observations were repeatedly interrupted by bursts of cheers. Mr. Tiddypot retorted that he well knew the spirit of honour by which the honourable and gallant gentleman was so honourably animated, and that he accepted an honourable explanation, offered in a way that did him honour; but he trusted that the Vestry would consider that his (Mr. Tiddypot's) honour had imperatively demanded of him that painful course which he had felt it due to his honour to adopt. The Captain and Mr. Tiddypot then touched their hats to one another across the Vestry, a great many times, and it is thought that these proceedings (reported to the extent of several columns in next Sunday's paper) will bring them in as churchwardens next year.

All this was strictly after the pattern of the real original, and so are the whole of our Vestry's proceedings. In all their debates, they are laudably imitative of the windy and wordy slang of the real original, and of nothing that is better in it. They have headstrong party animosities, without any reference to the merits of questions; they tack a surprising amount of debate to a very little business; they set more store by forms than they do by substances:—all very like the real original! It has been doubted in our borough, whether our Vestry is of any utility; but our own conclusion is, that it is of the use to the Borough that a diminishing mirror is to a painter, as enabling it to perceive in a small focus of absurdity all the surface defects of the real original.

OUR BORE

It is unnecessary to say that we keep a bore. Everybody does. But the bore whom we have the pleasure and honour of enumerating among our particular friends, is such a generic bore, and has so many traits (as it appears to us) in common with the great bore family, that we are tempted to make him the subject of the present notes. May he be generally accepted!

Our bore is admitted on all hands to be a good-hearted man. He may put fifty people out of temper, but he keeps his own. He preserves a sickly solid smile upon his face, when other faces are ruffled, by the perfection he has attained in his art, and has an equable voice which never travels out of one key or rises above one pitch. His manner is a manner of tranquil interest. None of his opinions are startling. Among his deepest-rooted convictions, it may be mentioned that he considers the air of England damp, and holds that our lively. neighbours—he always calls the French our lively neighbours—have the advantage of us in that particular. Nevertheless he is unable to forget that John Bull is John Bull all the world over, and that England with all her faults is England still.

Our bore has travelled. He could not possibly be a complete bore without having travelled. He rarely speaks of his travels without introducing, sometimes on his own plan of construction, morsels of the language of the country—which he always translates. You cannot name to him any little remote town in France, Italy, Germany, or Switzerland but he knows it well; stayed there a fortnight under peculiar circumstances. And talking of that little place, perhaps you know a statue over an old fountain, up a little court, which is the second—no, the third—stay—yes, the third turning on the right, after you come out of the Post-house, going up the hill towards the market? You *don't* know that statue? Nor that fountain? You surprise him! They are not usually seen by travellers (most extraordinary, he has never yet met with a single traveller who knew them, except one German, the most intelligent man he ever met in his life!) but he thought that YOU would have been the man to find them out. And then he describes them, in a circumstantial lecture half an hour long, generally delivered behind a door which is constantly being opened from the other side; and implores you, if you ever revisit that place, now do go and look at that statue and fountain!

Our bore, in a similar manner, being in Italy, made a discovery of a dreadful picture, which has been the terror of a large portion of the civilized world ever since. We have seen the liveliest men paralysed by it, across a broad dining-table. He was lounging among the mountains, sir, basking in the mellow influences of the climate, when he came to *una piccola chiesa*—a little church—or perhaps it would be more correct to say *una piccolissima cappella*—the smallest chapel you can possibly imagine—and walked in. There was nobody inside but a *cieco*—a blind man—saying his prayers, and a *vecchio padre*—old friar—rattling a money-box. But above the head of that friar, and immediately to the right of the altar as you enter—to the right of the altar? No. To the left of the altar as your enter—or say near the centre—there hung a painting (subject, Virgin and Child) so divine in its expression, so pure and yet so warm and rich in its tone, so fresh in its touch, at once so glowing in its colour and so statuesque in its repose, that our bore cried out in an ecstasy, "That's the finest picture in Italy!" And so it is, sir. There is no doubt of it. It is astonishing that that picture is so little known. Even the painter is uncertain. He afterwards took Blumb, of the Royal Academy (it is to be observed that our bore takes none but eminent people to see sights, and that none but eminent people take our bore), and you never saw a man so affected in your life as Blumb was. He cried like a child! And then our bore begins his description in detail—for all this is introductory—and strangles his hearers with the folds of the purple drapery.

By an equally fortunate conjunction of accidental circumstances, it happened that when our bore was in Switzerland, he discovered a Valley, of that superb character, that Chamouni is not to be mentioned in the same breath with it. This is how it was, sir. He was travelling on a mule—had been in the saddle some days—when, as he and the guide, Pierre Blanquo: whom you may know, perhaps?—our bore is sorry you don't, because he's the only guide deserving of the name—as he and Pierre were descending, towards evening, among those everlasting snows, to the little village of La Croix, our bore observed a mountain track turning off sharply to the right. At first he was uncertain whether it *was* a track at all, and in fact, he said to Pierre, "*Qu'est que c'est donc, mon ami?*—What is that, my friend?" "*Où, monsieur?*" said Pierre—"Where, sir?" "*Là!*—there!" said our bore. "*Monsieur, ce n'est rien de tout*—sir, it's nothing at all," said Pierre. "*Allons!*—Make haste. *Il va neiger*—it's going to snow!" But our bore was not to be done in that way, and he firmly replied, "I wish to go in that direction—*je veux y aller*. I am bent upon it—*je suis déterminé. En avant!*—go ahead!" In consequence of which firmness on our bore's part, they proceeded, sir, during two hours of evening, and three of moonlight (they waited in a cavern till the moon was up), along the slenderest track, overhanging perpendicularly the most awful gulfs, until they arrived, by a winding descent, in a valley that possibly, and he may say probably, was never visited by any stranger before. What a valley! Mountains pile on mountains, avalanches stemmed by pine forests; waterfalls, châlets, mountain-torrents, wooden bridges, every conceivable picture of Swiss scenery! The whole village turned out to receive our bore. The peasant girls kissed him, the men shook hands with him, one old lady of benevolent appearance wept upon his breast. He was conducted, in a primitive triumph, to the little inn: where he was taken ill next morning, and lay for six weeks, attended by the amiable hostess (the same benevolent old lady who had wept over night) and her charming daughter, Fanchette. It is nothing to say that they were attentive to him; they doted on him. They called him in their simple way, *l'Ange Anglais*—the English Angel. When our bore left the valley, there was not a dry eye in the place; some of the people attended him for miles. He begs and entreats of you as a personal favour, that if you ever go to Switzerland again (you have mentioned that your last visit was your twenty-third), you will go to that valley, and see Swiss scenery for the first time. And if you want really to know the pastoral people of Switzerland, and to understand them, mention, in that valley, our bore's name!

Our bore has a crushing brother in the East, who, somehow or other, was admitted to smoke pipes with Mehemet Ali, and instantly became an authority on the whole range of Eastern matters, from Haroun Alraschid to the present Sultan. He is in the habit of expressing mysterious opinions on this wide range of subjects, but on questions of foreign policy more particularly, to our bore, in letters; and our bore is continually sending bits of these letters to the newspapers (which they never insert), and carrying other bits about in his pocket-book. It is even whispered that he has been seen at the Foreign Office, receiving great consideration from the messengers, and having his card promptly borne into the sanctuary of the temple. The havoc committed in society by this Eastern brother is beyond belief. Our bore is always ready with him. We have known our bore to fall upon an intelligent young sojourner in the wilderness, in the first sentence of a narrative, and beat all confidence out of him with one blow of his brother. He became omniscient, as to foreign policy, in the smoking of those pipes with Mehemet Ali. The balance of power in Europe, the machinations of the Jesuits, the gentle and humanising influence of Austria, and position and prospects of that hero of the noble soul who is worshipped by happy France, are all easy reading to our bore's brother. And our bore is so provokingly self-denying about him! "I don't pretend to more than a very general knowledge of these subjects myself," says he, after enervating the intellects of several strong men, "but these are my brother's opinions, and I believe he is known to be well-informed."

The commonest incidents and places would appear to have been made special, expressly for our bore. Ask him whether he ever chanced to walk, between seven and eight in the morning, down St. James's Street, London, and he will tell you, never in his life but once. But it's curious that that once was in eighteen thirty; and that as our bore was walking down the street you have just mentioned, at the hour you have just mentioned—half-past seven—or twenty minutes to eight. No! Let him be correct!—exactly a quarter before eight by the palace clock—he met a fresh-coloured, grey-haired, good-humoured looking gentleman, with a brown umbrella, who, as he passed him, touched his hat and said, "Fine morning, sir, fine morning!"—William the Fourth!

Ask our bore whether he has seen Mr. Barry's new Houses of Parliament, and he will reply that he has not yet inspected them minutely, but that you remind him that it was his singular fortune to be the last man to see the old Houses of Parliament before the fire broke out. It happened in this way. Poor John Spine, the celebrated novelist, had taken him over to South Lambeth to read to him the last few chapters of what was certainly his best book—as our bore told him at the time, adding, "Now, my dear John, touch it, and you'll spoil it!"—and our bore was going back to the club by way of Millbank and Parliament Street, when he stopped to think of Canning, and look at the Houses of Parliament. Now, you know far more of the philosophy of Mind than our bore does, and are much better able to explain to him than he is to explain to you why or wherefore, at that particular time, the thought of fire should come into his head. But it did. It did. He thought, What a national calamity if an edifice connected with so many associations should be consumed by fire! At that time there was not a single soul in the street but himself. All was quiet, dark, and solitary. After contemplating the building for a minute—or, say a minute and a half, not more—our bore proceeded on his way, mechanically repeating, What a national calamity if such an edifice, connected with such associations, should be destroyed by—— A man coming towards him in a violent state of agitation completed the sentence, with the exclamation, Fire! Our bore looked round, and the whole structure was in a blaze.

In harmony and union with these experiences, our bore never went anywhere in a steamboat but he made either the best or the worst voyage ever known on that station. Either he overheard the captain say to himself, with his hands clasped, "We are all lost!" or the captain openly declared to him that he had never made such a run before, and never should be able to do it again. Our bore was in that express train on that railway, when they made (unknown to the passengers) the experiment of going at the rate of a hundred miles an hour. Our bore remarked on that occasion to the other people in the carriage, "This is too fast, but sit still!" He was at the Norwich musical festival when the extraordinary echo for which science has been wholly unable to account, was heard for the first and last time. He and the bishop heard it at the same moment, and caught each other's eyes. He was present at that illumination of St. Peter's, of which the Pope is known to have remarked, as he looked at it out of his window in the Vatican, "*O Cielo! Questa cosa non sara fatta, mai ancora, come questa*—O Heaven! this thing will never be done again, like this!" He has seen every lion he ever saw, under some remarkably propitious circumstances. He knows there is no fancy in it, because in every case the showman mentioned the fact at the time, and congratulated him upon it.

At one period of his life, our bore had an illness. It was an illness of a dangerous character for society at large. Innocently remark that you are very well, or that somebody else is very well; and our bore, with a preface that one never knows what a blessing health is until one has lost it, is reminded of that illness, and drags you through the whole of its symptoms, progress, and treatment. Innocently remark that you are not well, or that somebody else is not well, and the same inevitable result ensues. You will learn how our bore felt a tightness about here, sir, for which he couldn't account, accompanied with a constant sensation as if he were being stabbed—or, rather, jobbed—that expresses it more correctly—jobbed—with a blunt knife. Well, sir! This went on, until sparks began to flit before his eyes, water-wheels to turn round in his head, and hammers to beat incessantly, thump, thump, thump, all down his back—along the whole of the spinal vertebræ, Our bore, when his sensations had come to this, thought it a duty he owed to himself to take advice, and he said, Now, whom shall I consult? He naturally thought of Callow, at that time one of the most eminent physicians in London, and he went to Callow. Callow said, "Liver!" and prescribed rhubarb and calomel, low diet, and moderate exercise. Our bore went on with this treatment, getting worse every day, until he lost confidence in Callow, and went to Moon, whom half the town was then mad about. Moon was interested in the case; to do him justice he was very much interested in the case; and he said, "Kidneys!" He altered the whole treatment, sir—gave strong acids, cupped, and blistered. This went on, our bore still getting worse every day, until he openly told Moon it would be a satisfaction to him if he would have a consultation with Clatter. The moment Clatter saw our bore, he said, "Accumulation of fat about the heart!" Snugglewood, who was called in with him, differed and said, "Brain!" But what they all agreed upon was, to lay our bore upon his back, to shave his head, to leech him, to administer enormous quantities of medicine, and to keep him low; so that he was reduced to a mere shadow, you wouldn't have known him, and nobody considered it possible that he could ever recover. This was his condition, sir, when he heard of Jilkins—at that period in a very small practice, and living in the upper part of a house in Great Portland Street; but still, you understand, with a rising reputation among the few people to whom he was known. Being in that condition in which a drowning man catches at a straw, our bore sent for Jilkins. Jilkins came. Our bore liked his eye, and said, "Mr. Jilkins, I have a presentiment that you will do me good." Jilkins's reply was characteristic of the man. It was, "Sir, I mean to do you good." This confirmed our bore's opinion of his eye, and they went into the case together—went completely into it. Jilkins then got up, walked across the room, came back, and sat down. His words were these. "You have been humbugged. This is a case of indigestion, occasioned by deficiency of power in the Stomach. Take a mutton chop in half-an-hour, with a glass of the finest old sherry that can be got for money. Take two mutton chops to-morrow, and two glasses of the finest old sherry. Next day, I'll come again." In a week our bore was on his legs, and Jilkins's success dates from that period!

Our bore is great in secret information. He happens to know many things that nobody else knows. He can generally tell you where the split is in the Ministry; he knows a deal about the Queen; and has little anecdotes to relate of the royal nursery. He gives you the judge's private opinion of Sludge the murderer, and his thoughts when he tried him. He happens to know what such a man got by such a transaction, and it was fifteen thousand five hundred pounds, and his income is twelve thousand a year. Our bore is also great in mystery. He believes, with an exasperating appearance of profound meaning, that you saw Parkins last Sunday?—Yes, you did.—Did he say anything particular?—No, nothing particular.—Our bore is surprised at that.—Why?—Nothing. Only he understood that Parkins had come to tell you something.—What about?—Well! our bore is not at liberty to mention what about. But he believes you will hear that from Parkins himself, soon, and he hopes it may not surprise you as it did him. Perhaps, however, you never heard about Parkins's wife's sister?—No.—Ah! says our bore, that explains it!

Our bore is also great in argument. He infinitely enjoys a long humdrum, drowsy interchange of words of dispute about nothing. He considers that it strengthens the mind, consequently, he "don't see that," very often. Or, he would be glad to know what you mean by that. Or, he doubts that. Or, he has always understood exactly the reverse of that. Or, he can't admit that. Or, he begs to deny that. Or, surely you don't mean that. And so on. He once advised us; offered us a piece of advice, after the fact, totally impracticable and wholly impossible of acceptance, because it supposed the fact, then eternally disposed of, to be yet in abeyance. It was a dozen years ago, and to this hour our bore benevolently wishes, in a mild voice, on certain regular occasions, that we had thought better of his opinion.

The instinct with which our bore finds out another bore, and closes with him, is amazing. We have seen him pick his man out of fifty men, in a couple of minutes. They love to go (which they do naturally) into a slow argument on a previously exhausted subject, and to contradict each other, and to wear the hearers out, without impairing their own perennial freshness as bores. It improves the good understanding between them, and they get together afterwards, and bore each other amicably. Whenever we see our bore behind a door with another bore, we know that when he comes forth, he will praise the other bore as one of the most intelligent men he ever met. And this bringing us to the close of what we had to say about our bore, we are anxious to have it understood that he never bestowed this praise on us.

THE LAMPLIGHTER

"If you talk of Murphy and Francis Moore, gentlemen," said the lamplighter who was in the chair, "I mean to say that neither of 'em ever had any more to do with the stars than Tom Grig had."

"And what had *he* to do with 'em?" asked the lamplighter who officiated as vice.

"Nothing at all," replied the other; "just exactly nothing at all."

"Do you mean to say you don't believe in Murphy, then?" demanded the lamplighter who had opened the discussion.

"I mean to say I believe in Tom Grig," replied the chairman. "Whether I believe in Murphy, or not, is a matter between me and my conscience; and whether Murphy believes in himself, or not, is a matter between him and his conscience. Gentlemen, I drink your healths."

The lamplighter who did the company this honour, was seated in the chimney-corner of a certain tavern, which has been, time out of mind, the Lamplighters' House of Call. He sat in the midst of a circle of lamplighters, and was the cacique, or chief of the tribe.

If any of our readers have had the good fortune to behold a lamplighter's funeral, they will not be surprised to learn that lamplighters are a strange and primitive people; that they rigidly adhere to old ceremonies and customs which have been handed down among them from father to son since the first public lamp was lighted out of doors; that they intermarry, and betroth their children in infancy; that they enter into no plots or conspiracies (for who ever heard of a traitorous lamplighter?); that they commit no crimes against the laws of their country (there being no instance of a murderous or burglarious lamplighter); that they are, in short, notwithstanding their apparently volatile and restless character, a highly moral and reflective people: having among themselves as many traditional observances as the Jews, and being, as a body, if not as old as the hills, at least as old as the streets. It is an article of their creed that the first faint glimmering of true civilization shone in the first street-light maintained at the public expense. They trace their existence and high position in the public esteem, in a direct line to the heathen mythology; and hold that the history of Prometheus himself is but a pleasant fable, whereof the true hero is a lamplighter.

"Gentlemen," said the lamplighter in the chair, "I drink your healths."

"And, perhaps, Sir," said the vice, holding up his glass, and rising a little way off his seat and sitting down again, in token that he recognised and returned the compliment, "perhaps you will add to that condescension by telling us who Tom Grig was, and how he came to be connected in your mind with Francis Moore, Physician."

"Hear, hear, hear!" cried the lamplighters generally.

"Tom Grig, gentlemen," said the chairman, "was one of us; and it happend to him, as it don't often happen to a public character in our line, that he had his what-you-may-call-it cast."

"His head?" said the vice.

"No," replied the chairman, "not his head."

"His face, perhaps?" said the vice. "No, not his face." "His legs?" "No, not his legs." Nor yet his arms, nor his hands, nor his feet, nor his chest, all of which were severally suggested.

"His nativity, perhaps?"

"That's it," said the chairman, awakening from his thoughtful attitude at the suggestion. "His nativity. That's what Tom had cast, gentlemen."

"In plaister?" asked the vice.

"I don't rightly know how it's done," returned the chairman. "But I suppose it was."

And there he stopped as if that were all he had to say; whereupon there arose a murmur among the company, which at length resolved itself into a request, conveyed through the vice, that he would go on. This being exactly what the chairman wanted, he mused for a little time, performed that agreeable ceremony which is popularly termed wetting one's whistle, and went on thus:

"Tom Grig, gentlemen, was, as I have said, one of us; and I may go further, and say he was an ornament to us, and such a one as only the good old times of oil and cotton could have produced. Tom's family, gentlemen, were all lamplighters."

"Not the ladies, I hope?" asked the vice.

"They had talent enough for it, Sir," rejoined the chairman, "and would have been, but for the prejudices of society. Let women have their rights, Sir, and the females of Tom's family would have been every one of 'em in office. But that emancipation hasn't come yet, and hadn't then, and consequently they confined themselves to the bosoms of their families, cooked the dinners, mended the clothes, minded the children, comforted their husbands, and attended to the house-keeping generally. It's a hard thing upon the women, gentlemen, that they are limited to such a sphere of action as this; very hard.

"I happen to know all about Tom, gentlemen, from the circumstance of his uncle by his mother's side having been my particular friend. His (that's Tom's uncle's) fate was a melancholy one. Gas was the death of him. When it was first talked of, he laughed. He wasn't angry; he laughed at the credulity of human nature. 'They might as well talk,' he says, 'of laying on an everlasting succession of glow-worms;' and then he laughed again, partly at his joke, and partly at poor humanity.

"In course of time, however, the thing got ground, the experiment was made, and they lighted up Pall Mall. Tom's uncle went to see it.

I've heard that he fell off his ladder fourteen times that night, from weakness, and that he would certainly have gone on falling till he killed himself, if his last tumble hadn't been into a wheelbarrow which was going his way, and humanely took him home. 'I foresee in this,' says Tom's uncle faintly, and taking to his bed as he spoke—'I foresee in this,' he says, 'the breaking up of our profession. There's no more going the rounds to trim by daylight, no more dribbling down the oil on the hats and bonnets of ladies and gentlemen when one feels in spirits. Any low fellow can light a gas-lamp. And it's all up.' In this state of mind, he petitioned the government for—I want a word again, gentlemen—what do you call that which they give to people when it's found out, at last, that they've never been of any use, and have been paid too much for doing nothing?"

"Compensation?" suggested the vice.

"That's it," said the chairman. "Compensation. They didn't give it him, though, and then he got very fond of his country all at once, and went about saying that gas was a death-blow to his native land, and that it was a plot of the radicals to ruin the country and destroy the oil and cotton trade for ever, and that the whales would go and kill themselves privately, out of sheer spite and vexation at not being caught. At last he got right-down cracked; called his tobacco-pipe a gas-pipe; thought his tears were lamp-oil; and went on with all manner of nonsense of that sort, till one night he hung himself on a lamp-iron in Saint Martin's Lane, and there was an end of *him*.

"Tom loved him, gentlemen, but he survived it. He shed a tear over his grave, got very drunk, spoke a funeral oration that night in the watch-house, and was fined five shillings for it, in the morning. Some men are none the worse for this sort of thing. Tom was one of 'em. He went that very afternoon on a new beat: as clear in his head, and as free from fever as Father Mathew himself.

"Tom's new beat, gentlemen, was—I can't exactly say where, for that he'd never tell; but I know it was in a quiet part of town, where there were some queer old houses. I have always had it in my head that it must have been somewhere near Canonbury Tower in Islington, but that's a matter of opinion. Wherever it was, he went upon it, with a bran-new ladder, a white hat, a brown holland jacket and trousers, a blue neckerchief, and a sprig of full-blown double wallflower in his button-hole. Tom was always genteel in his appearance, and I have heard from the best judges, that if he had left his ladder at home that afternoon, you might have took him for a lord.

"He was always merry, was Tom, and such a singer, that if there was any encouragement for native talent, he'd have been at the opera. He was on his ladder, lighting his first lamp, and singing to himself in a manner more easily to be conceived than described, when he hears the clock strike five, and suddenly sees an old gentleman with a telescope in his hand, throw up a window and look at him very hard.

"Tom didn't know what could be passing in this old gentleman's mind. He thought it likely enough that he might be saying within himself, 'Here's a new lamplighter—a good-looking young fellow—

shall I stand something to drink?' Thinking this possible, he keeps quite still, pretending to be very particular about the wick, and looks at the old gentleman sideways, seeming to take no notice of him.

"Gentlemen, he was one of the strangest and most mysterious-looking files that ever Tom clapped his eyes on. He was dressed all slovenly and untidy, in a great gown of a kind of bed-furniture pattern, with a cap of the same on his head; and a long old flapped waistcoat; with no braces, no strings, very few buttons—in short, with hardly any of those artificial contrivances that hold society together. Tom knew by these signs, and by his not being shaved, and by his not being over-clean, and by a sort of wisdom not quite awake, in his face, that he was a scientific old gentleman. He often told me that if he could have conceived the possibility of the whole Royal Society being boiled down into one man, he should have said the old gentleman's body was that Body.

"The old gentleman claps the telescope to his eye, looks all round, sees nobody else in sight, stares at Tom again, and cries out very loud:

" 'Hal-loa!'

" 'Halloa, Sir,' says Tom from the ladder; 'and halloa again, if you come to that.'

" 'Here's an extraordinary fulfilment,' says the old gentleman, 'of a prediction of the planets.'

" 'Is there?' says Tom. 'I'm very glad to hear it.'

" 'Young man,' says the old gentleman, 'you don't know me.'

" 'Sir,' says Tom, 'I have not that honour; but I shall be happy to drink your health, notwithstanding.'

" 'I read,' cries the old gentleman, without taking any notice of this politeness on Tom's part—'I read what's going to happen, in the stars.'

"Tom thanked him for the information, and begged to know if anything particular was going to happen in the stars, in the course of a week or so; but the old gentleman, correcting him, explained that he read in the stars what was going to happen on dry land, and that he was acquainted with all the celestial bodies.

" 'I hope they're all well, Sir,' says Tom,—'everybody.'

" 'Hush!' cried the old gentleman. 'I have consulted the book of Fate with rare and wonderful success. I am versed in the great sciences of astrology and astronomy. In my house here, I have every description of apparatus for observing the course and motion of the planets. Six months ago, I derived from this source, the knowledge that precisely as the clock struck five this afternoon a stranger would present himself—the destined husband of my young and lovely niece—in reality of illustrious and high descent, but whose birth would be enveloped in uncertainty and mystery. Don't tell me yours isn't, says the old gentleman, who was in such a hurry to speak that he couldn't get the words out fast enough, 'for I know better.'

"Gentlemen, Tom was so astonished when he heard him say this that he could hardly keep his footing on the ladder, and found it necessary to hold on by the lamp-post. There *was* a mystery about his birth. His mother had always admitted it. Tom had never known who was his father, and some people had gone so far as to say that even *she* was in doubt.

"While he was in this state of amazement, the old gentleman leaves the window, bursts out of the house-door, shakes the ladder, and Tom, like a ripe pumpkin, comes sliding down into his arms.

" 'Let me embrace you,' he says, folding his arms about him, and nearly lighting up his old bed-furniture gown at Tom's link. 'You're a man of noble aspect. Everything combines to prove the accuracy of my observations. You have had mysterious promptings within you,' he says; 'I know you have had whisperings of greatness, eh?' he says.

" 'I think I have,' says Tom—Tom was one of those who can persuade themselves to anything they like—'I've often thought I wasn't the small beer I was taken for.'

" 'You were right,' cries the old gentleman, hugging him again. 'Come in. My niece awaits us.'

" 'Is the young lady tolerable good-looking, Sir?' says Tom, hanging fire rather, as he thought of her playing the piano, and knowing French, and being up to all manner of accomplishments.

" 'She's beautiful!' cries the old gentleman, who was in such a terrible bustle that he was all in a perspiration. 'She has a graceful carriage, an exquisite shape, a sweet voice, a countenance beaming with animation and expression; and the eye,' he says, rubbing his hands, 'of a startled fawn.'

"Tom supposed this might mean, what was called among his circle of acquaintance, 'a game eye'; and, with a view to this defect, inquired whether the young lady had any cash.

" 'She has five thousand pounds,' cries the old gentleman. 'But what of that? what of that? A word in your ear. I'm in search of the philosopher's stone. I have very nearly found it—not quite. It turns everything to gold; that's its property.'

"Tom naturally thought it must have a deal of property; and said that when the old gentleman did get it, he hoped he'd be careful to keep it in the family.

" 'Certainly,' he says, 'of course. Five thousand pounds! What's five thousand pounds to us? What's five million?' he says. 'What's five thousand million? Money will be nothing to us. We shall never be able to spend it fast enough.'

" 'We'll try what we can do, Sir,' says Tom.

" 'We will,' says the old gentleman. 'Your name?'

" 'Grig,' says Tom.

The old gentleman embraced him again, very tight; and without speaking another word, dragged him into the house in such an excited manner, that it was as much as Tom could do to take his link and ladder with him, and put them down in the passage.

"Gentlemen, if Tom hadn't been always remarkable for his love of truth, I think you would still have believed him when he said that all this was like a dream. There is no better way for a man to find out whether he is really asleep or awake, than calling for something to eat· If he's in a dream, gentleman, he'll find something wanting in the flavour, depend upon it.

"Tom explained his doubts to the old gentleman, and said that if there was any cold meat in the house, it would ease his mind very much to test himself at once. The old gentleman ordered up a venison pie, a small ham, and a bottle of very old Madeira. At the first mouthful of pie and the first glass of wine, Tom smacks his lips and cries out, 'I'm awake—wide awake'; and to prove that he was so, gentlemen, he made an end of 'em both.

"When Tom had finished his meal (which he never spoke of afterwards without tears in his eyes), the old gentleman hugs him again, and says, 'Noble stranger! let us visit my young and lovely niece.' Tom, who was a little elevated with the wine, replied, 'The noble stranger is agreeable!' At which words the old gentleman took him by the hand, and led him to the parlour; crying as he opened the door, 'Here is Mr. Grig, the favourite of the planets!'

"I will not attempt a description of female beauty, gentlemen, for every one of us has a model of his own that suits his own taste best. In this parlour that I'm speaking of, there were two young ladies; and if every gentleman present, will imagine two models of his own in their places, and will be kind enough to polish 'em up to the very highest pitch of perfection, he will then have a faint conception of their uncommon radiance.

"Besides these two young ladies, there was their waiting-woman, that under any other circumstances Tom would have looked upon as a Venus; and besides her, there was a tall, thin, dismal-faced young gentleman, half man and half boy, dressed in a childish suit of clothes very much too short in the legs and arms; and looking, according to Tom's comparison, like one of the wax juveniles from a tailor's door, grown up and run to seed. Now, this youngster stamped his foot upon the ground and looked very fierce at Tom, and Tom looked fierce at him—for to tell the truth, gentlemen, Tom more than half suspected that when they entered the room he was kissing one of the young ladies; and for anything Tom knew, you observe, it might be *his* young lady—which was not pleasant.

" 'Sir,' says Tom, 'before we proceed any further, will you have the goodness to inform me who this young Salamander'—Tom called him that for aggravation, you perceive, gentlemen—'who this young Salamander may be?'

" 'That, Mr. Grig,' says the old gentleman, 'is my little boy. He was christened Galileo Isaac Newton Flamstead. Don't mind him. He's a mere child.'

" 'And a very fine child too,' says Tom—still aggravating, you'll observe—'of his age, and as good as fine, I have no doubt. How do you do, my man?' with which kind and patronising expressions, Tom reached up to pat him on the head, and quoted two lines about little boys, from Doctor Watts's Hymns, which he had learnt at a Sunday School.

"It was very easy to see, gentlemen, by this youngster's frowning and by the waiting-maid's tossing her head and turning up her nose, and by the young ladies turning their backs and talking together at the other end of the room, that nobody but the old gentleman took very kindly to the noble stranger. Indeed, Tom plainly heard the waiting-woman say of her master, that so far from being able to read the stars as he pretended, she didn't believe he knew his letters in 'em, or at best that he had got further than words in one syllable; but Tom, not minding this (for he was in spirits after the Madeira), looks with an agreeable air towards the young ladies, and, kissing his hand to both, says to the old gentleman, 'Which is which?'

" 'This,' says the old gentleman, leading out the handsomest, if one of 'em could possibly be said to be handsomer than the other—'this is my niece, Miss Fanny Barker.'

" 'If you'll permit me, Miss,' says Tom, 'being a noble stranger and a favourite of the planets, I will conduct myself as such.' With these words, he kisses the young lady in a very affable way, turns to the old gentleman, slaps him on the back, and says, 'When's it to come off, my buck?'

"The young lady coloured so deep, and her lip trembled so much, gentlemen, that Tom really thought she was going to cry. But she kept her feelings down, and turning to the old gentleman, says, 'Dear uncle, though you have the absolute disposal of my hand and fortune, and though you mean well in disposing of 'em thus, I ask you whether you don't think this a mistake? Don't you think, dear uncle,' she says, 'that the stars must be in error? Is it not possible that the comet may have put 'em out?'

" 'The stars,' says the old gentleman, 'couldn't make a mistake if they tried. Emma,' he says to the other young lady.

" 'Yes, papa,' says she.

" 'The same day that makes your cousin Mrs. Grig will unite you to the gifted Mooney. No remonstrance—no tears. Now, Mr. Grig, let me conduct you to that hallowed ground, that philosophical retreat, where my friend and partner, the gifted Mooney of whom I have just now spoken, is even now pursuing those discoveries which shall enrich us with the precious metal, and make us masters of the world. Come, Mr. Grig,' he says.

" 'With all my heart, Sir,' replied Tom; 'and luck to the gifted Mooney, say I—not so much on his account as for our worthy selves!' With this sentiment, Tom kissed his hand to the ladies again, and followed him out; having the gratification to perceive, as he looked back, that they were all hanging on by the arms and legs of Galileo Isaac Newton Flamstead, to prevent him from following the noble stranger, and tearing him to pieces.

"Gentlemen, Tom's father-in-law that was to be, took him by the hand, and having lighted a little lamp, led him across a paved court-yard at the back of the house, into a very large, dark, gloomy room: filled with all manner of bottles, globes, books, telescopes, crocodiles, alligators, and other scientific instruments of every kind. In the centre of this room was a stove or furnace, with what Tom called a pot, but which in my opinion was a crucible, in full boil. In one corner was a sort of ladder leading through the roof; and up this latter the old gentleman pointed, as he said in a whisper:

" 'The observatory. Mr. Mooney is even now watching for the precise time at which we are to come into all the riches of the earth. It will be necessary for he and I, alone in that silent place, to cast your nativity before the hour arrives. Put the day and minute of your birth on this piece of paper, and leave the rest to me.'

" 'You don't mean to say,' says Tom, doing as he was told and giving him back the paper, 'that I'm to wait here long, do you? It's a precious dismal place.'

" 'Hush!' says the old gentleman. 'It's hallowed ground. Farewell!'

" 'Stop a minute,' says Tom. 'What a hurry you're in! What's in that large bottle yonder?'

" 'It's a child with three heads,' says the old gentleman; 'and everything else in proportion.'

" 'Why don't you throw him away?' says Tom. 'What do you keep such unpleasant things here for?'

" 'Throw him away!' cries the old gentleman. 'We use him constantly in astrology. He's a charm.'

" 'I shouldn't have thought it,' says Tom, 'from his appearance. *Must* you go, I say?'

"The old gentleman makes him no answer, but climbs up the ladder in a greater bustle than ever. Tom looked after his legs till there was nothing of him left, and then sat down to wait; feeling (so he used to say) as comfortable as if he was going to be made a freemason, and they were heating the pokers.

"Tom waited so long, gentlemen, that he began to think it must be getting on for midnight at least, and felt more dismal and lonely than ever he had done in all his life. He tried every means of whiling away the time, but it never had seemed to move so slow. First, he took a nearer view of the child with three heads, and thought what a comfort it must have been to his parents. Then he looked up a long telescope which was pointed out of the window, but saw nothing particular, in consequence of the stopper being on at the other end. Then he came to a skeleton in a glass case, labelled, 'Skeleton of a Gentleman—prepared by Mr. Mooney,'—which made him hope that Mr. Mooney night not be in the habit of preparing gentlemen that way without their own consent. A hundred times, at least, he looked into the pot where they were boiling the philosopher's stone down to the proper consistency, and wondered whether it was nearly done. 'When it is,' thinks Tom, 'I'll send out for sixpenn'orth of sprats, and turn 'em into gold fish for a first experiment.' Besides which, he made up his mind, gentlemen, to have a country-house and a park; and to plant a bit of it with a double row of gas-lamps a mile long, and go out every night with a French-polished mahogany ladder, and two servants in livery behind him, to light 'em for his own pleasure.

"At length and at last, the old gentleman's legs appeared upon the steps leading through the roof, and he came slowly down: bringing along with him, the gifted Mooney. This Mooney, gentleman, was even more scientific in appearance than his friend; and had, as Tom often declared upon his word of honour, the dirtiest face we can possibly know of, in this imperfect state of existence.

"Gentlemen, you are all aware that if a scientific man isn't absent in mind, he's of no good at all. Mr. Mooney was so absent, that when the old gentleman said to him, 'Shake hands with Mr. Grig,' he put out his leg. 'Here's a mind, Mr. Grig!' cries the old gentleman in a rapture. 'Here's philosophy! Here's rumination! Don't disturb him,' he says, 'for this is amazing!'

"Tom had no wish to disturb him, having nothing particular to say; but he was so uncommonly amazing, that the old gentleman got impatient, and determined to give him an electric shock to bring him to—'for you must know, Mr. Grig,' he says, 'that we always keep a strongly charged battery, ready for that purpose.' These means being resorted to, gentlemen, the gifted Mooney revived with a loud roar, and he no sooner came to himself than both he and the old gentleman looked at Tom with compassion, and shed tears abundantly.

" 'My dear friend,' said the old gentleman to the Gifted, 'prepare him.'

" 'I say,' cried Tom, falling back, 'none of that, you know. No preparing by Mr. Mooney if you please.'

" 'Alas!' replies the old gentleman, 'you don't understand us. My friend, inform him of his fate.—I can't.'

"The Gifted mustered up his voice, after many efforts, and informed Tom that his nativity had been carefully cast, and he would expire at exactly thirty-five minutes, twenty-seven seconds, and five-sixths of a second past nine o'clock, a.m., on that day two months.

"Gentlemen, I leave you to judge what were Tom's feelings at this announcement, on the eve of matrimony and endless riches. 'I think,' he says in a trembling voice, 'there must be a mistake in the working of that sum. Will you do me the favour to cast it up again?'—'There is no mistake,' replies the old gentleman, 'it is confirmed by Francis Moore, Physician. Here is the prediction for two-morrow two months.' And he showed him the page, where sure enough were these words—'The decease of a great person may be looked for, about this time.'

" 'Which,' says the old gentleman, 'is clearly you, Mr. Grig.'

" 'Too clearly,' cries Tom, sinking into a chair, and giving one hand to the old gentleman, and one to the Gifted. 'The orb of day has set on Thomas Grig for ever!'

"At this affecting remark, the Gifted shed tears again, and the other two mingled their tears with his, in a kind—if I may use the expression—of Mooney and Co.'s entire. But the old gentleman recovering first, observed that this was only a reason for hastening the marriage, in order that Tom's distinguished race might be transmitted to posterity; and requesting the Gifted to console Mr. Grig during his temporary absence, he withdrew to settle the preliminaries with his niece immediately.

"And now, gentlemen, a very extraordinary and remarkable occurrence took place; for as Tom sat in a melancholy way in one chair, and the Gifted sat in a melancholy way in another, a couple of doors were thrown violently open, the two young ladies rushed in, and one knelt down in a loving attitude at Tom's feet, and the other at the Gifted's. So far, perhaps, as Tom was concerned—as he used to say—you will say there was nothing strange in this: but you will be of a different opinion when you understand that Tom's young lady was kneeling to the Gifted, and the Gifted's young lady was kneeling to Tom.

" 'Halloa! stop a minute!' cried Tom; 'here's a mistake. I need condoling with by sympathising women, under my afflicting circumstances; but we're out in the figure. Change partners, Mooney.'

" 'Monster!' cries Tom's young lady, clinging to the Gifted.

" 'Miss!' says Tom. 'Is *that* your manners?'

" 'I abjure thee!' cries Tom's young lady. 'I renounce thee. I never will be thine. Thou,' she says to the Gifted, 'art the object of my first and all-engrossing passion. Wrapt in thy sublime visions, thou hast not perceived my love; but, driven to despair, I now shake off the woman and avow it. Oh, cruel, cruel man!' With which reproach she laid her head upon the Gifted's breast, and put her arms about him in the tenderest manner possible, gentlemen.

" 'And I,' says the other young lady, in a sort of ecstasy, that made Tom start—'I hereby abjure my chosen husband too. Hear me, Goblin!'—this was to the Gifted—'Hear me! I hold thee in the deepest detestation. The maddening interview of this one night has filled my soul with love—but not for thee. It is for thee, for thee, young man,' she cries to Tom. 'As Monk Lewis finely observes, Thomas, Thomas, I am thine, Thomas, Thomas, thou art mine: thine for ever, mine for ever!' with which words, she became very tender likewise.

"Tom and the Gifted, gentlemen, as you may believe, looked at each other in a very awkward manner, and with thoughts not at all complimentary to the two young ladies. As to the Gifted, I have heard Tom say often, that he was certain he was in a fit, and had it inwardly.

" 'Speak to me! Oh, speak to me!' cries Tom's young lady to the Gifted.

" 'I don't want to speak to anybody,' he says, finding his voice at last, and trying to push her away. 'I think I had better go. I'm—I'm frightened,' he says, looking about as if he had lost something.

" 'Not one look of love!' she cries. 'Hear me while I declare——'

" 'I don't know how to look a look of love,' he says, all in a maze. 'Don't declare anything. I don't want to hear anybody.'

" 'That's right!' cries the old gentleman (who it seems had been listening). 'That's right! Don't hear her. Emma shall marry you to-morrow, my friend, whether she likes it or not, and *she* shall marry Mr. Grig.'

"Gentlemen, these words were no sooner out of his mouth than Galileo Isaac Newton Flamstead (who it seems had been listening too) darts in, and spinning round and round, like a young giant's top, cries, 'Let her. Let her. I'm fierce; I'm furious. I give her leave. I'll never marry anybody after this—never. It isn't safe. She is the falsest of the false,' he cries, tearing his hair and gnashing his teeth; 'and I'll live and die a bachelor!'

" 'The little boy,' observed the Gifted gravely, 'albeit of tender years, has spoken wisdom. I have been led to the contemplation of woman-kind, and will not adventure on the troubled waters of matrimony.'

" 'What!' says the old gentleman, 'not marry my daughter! Won't you, Mooney? Not if I make her? Won't you? Won't you?'

" 'No,' says Mooney, 'I won't. And if anybody asks me any more, I'll run away, and never come back again.'

" 'Mr. Grig,' says the old gentleman, 'the stars must be obeyed. You have not changed your mind because of a little girlish folly—eh, Mr. Grig?'

"Tom, gentlemen, had had his eyes about him, and was pretty sure that all this was a device and trick of the waiting-maid to put him off his inclination. He had seen her hiding and skipping about the two doors, and had observed that a very little whispering from her pacified the Salamander directly. 'So,' thinks Tom, 'this is a plot—but it won't fit.'

" 'Eh, Mr. Grig?' says the old gentleman.

" 'Why, Sir,' says Tom, pointing to the crucible, 'if the soup's nearly ready——'

" 'Another hour beholds the consummation of our labours,' returned the old gentleman.

" 'Very good,' says Tom, with a mournful air. 'It's only for two months, but I may as well be the richest man in the world even for that time. I'm not particular, I'll take her, Sir. I'll take her.'

"The old gentleman was in a rapture to find Tom still in the same mind, and drawing the young lady towards him by little and little, was joining their hands by main force, when all of a sudden, gentlemen, the crucible blows up, with a great crash; everybody screams; the room is filled with smoke; and Tom, not knowing what may happen next, throws himself into a Fancy attitude, and says, 'Come on, if you're a man!' without addressing himself to anybody in particular.

" 'The labours of fifteen years,' says the old gentlemen, clasping his hands and looking down upon the Gifted, who was saving the pieces, 'are destroyed in an instant!'—And I am told, gentlemen, by-the-bye, that this same philosopher's stone would have been discovered a hundred times at least, to speak within bounds, if it wasn't for the one unfortunate circumstance that the apparatus always blows up, when it's on the very point of succeeding.

" Tom turns pale when he hears the old gentleman expressing himself to this unpleasant effect, and stammers out that if it's quite agreeable to all parties, he would like to know exactly what has happened, and what change has really taken place in the prospects of that company.

" 'We have failed for the present, Mr. Grig,' said the old gentleman, wiping his forehead, 'And I regret it the more, because I have in fact invested my niece's five thousand pounds in this glorious speculation. But don't be cast down,' he says, anxiously—'in another fifteen years, Mr. Grig——'

" 'Oh!' cries Tom, letting the young lady's hand fall. 'Were the stars very positive about this union, Sir?'

" 'They were,' says the old gentleman.

" 'I'm sorry to hear it,' Tom makes answer, 'for it's no go, Sir.'

" 'No what!' cries the old gentleman.

" 'Go, Sir,' says Tom, fiercely. 'I forbid the banns.' And with these words—which are the very words he used—he sat himself down in a chair, and, laying his head upon the table, thought with a secret grief of what was to come to pass on that day two months.

"Tom always said, gentlemen, that that waiting-maid was the artfullest minx he had ever seen; and he left it in writing in this country when he went to colonize abroad, that he was certain in his own mind she and the Salamander had blown up the philospher's stone on purpose, and to cut him out of his property. I believe Tom was in the right, gentlemen; but whether or no, she comes forward at this point, and says, 'May I speak, Sir?' and the old gentleman answering, 'Yes, you may,' she goes on to say that 'the stars are no doubt quite right in every respect, but Tom is not the man.' And she says, 'Don't you remember, Sir, that when the clock struck five this afternoon, you gave Master Galileo a rap on the head with your telescope, and told him to get out of the way?' 'Yes, I do,' says the old gentleman. 'Then,' says the waiting-maid, 'I say he's the man, and the prophecy is fulfilled.' The old gentleman staggers at this, as if somebody had hit him a blow on the chest, and cries, 'He! why he's a boy!' Upon that, gentleman, the Salamander cries out that he'll be twenty-one next Lady-day; and complains that his father has always been so busy with the sun round which the earth revolves, that he has never taken any notice of the son that revolves round him; and that he hasn't had a new suit of clothes since he was fourteen; and that he wasn't even taken out of nankeen frocks and trousers till he was quite unpleasant in 'em; and touches on a good many more family matters to the same purpose. To make short of a long story, gentlemen, they all talk together, and cry together, and remind the old gentleman that as to the noble family, his own grandfather would have been lord mayor if he hadn't died at a dinner the year before; and they show him by all kinds of arguments that if the cousins are married, the prediction comes true every way. At last, the old gentleman being quite convinced, gives in; and joins their hands; and leaves his daughter to marry anybody she likes; and they are all well pleased; and the Gifted as well as any of them.

"In the middle of this little family party, gentlemen, sits Tom all the while, as miserable as you like. But, when everything else is arranged, the old gentleman's daughter says, that their strange conduct was a little device of the waiting-maid's to disgust the lovers he had chosen for 'em, and will he forgive her? and if he will, perhaps he might even find her a husband—and when she says that, she looks uncommon hard at Tom. Then the waiting-maid says that, oh dear! she couldn't abear Mr. Grig should think she wanted him to marry her; and that she had even gone so far as to refuse the last lamplighter, who was now a literary character (having set up as a bill-sticker); and that she hoped Mr. Grig would not suppose she was on her last legs by any means, for the baker was very strong in his attentions at that moment, and as to the butcher, he was frantic. And I don't know how much more she might have said, gentlemen (for, as you know, this kind of young women are rare ones to talk), if the old gentleman hadn't cut in suddenly, and asked Tom if he'd have her, with ten pounds to recompense him for his loss of time and disappointment, and as a kind of bribe to keep the story secret.

" 'It don't much matter, Sir,' says Tom, 'I ain't long for this world. Eight weeks of marriage, especially with this young woman, might reconcile me to my fate. I think,' he says, 'I could go off easy after that.' With which he embraces her with a very dismal face, and groans in a way that might move a heart of stone—even of philosopher's stone.

" 'Egad,' says the old gentleman, 'that reminds me—this bustle put it out of my head—there was a figure wrong. He'll live to a green old age—eighty-seven at least!"

" 'How much, Sir?' cries Tom.

" 'Eighty-seven!' says the old gentleman.

"Without another word, Tom flings himself on the old gentleman's neck; throws up his hat; cuts a caper; defies the waiting-maid; and refers her to the butcher.

" 'You won't marry her!' says the old gentleman, angrily.

" 'And live after it!' says Tom. 'I'd sooner marry a mermaid with a small-tooth comb and looking-glass.'

" 'Then take the consequences,' says the other.

"With those words—I beg your kind attention here, gentlemen, for it's worth your notice—the old gentleman wetted the forefinger of his right hand in some of the liquor from the crucible that was spilt on the floor, and drew a small triangle on Tom's forehead. The room swam before his eyes, and he found himself in the watch-house."

"Found himself *where?*" cried the vice, on behalf of the company generally.

"In the watch-house," said the chairman. "It was late at night, and he found himself in the very watch-house from which he had been let out that morning."

"Did he go home?" asked the vice.

"The watch-house people rather objected to that," said the chairman; "so he stopped there that night, and went before the magistrate in the morning. 'Why, you're here again, are you?' says the magistrate, adding insult to injury; 'we'll trouble you for five shillings more, if you can conveniently spare the money.' Tom told him he had been enchanted, but it was of no use. He told the contractors the same, but they wouldn't believe him. It was very hard upon him, gentlemen, as he often said, for was it likely he'd go and invent such a tale? They shook their heads and told him he'd say anything but his prayers—as indeed he would; there's no doubt about that. It was the only imputation on his moral character that ever *I* heard of.'

SUNDAY UNDER THREE HEADS

I

AS IT IS

THERE are few things from which I derive greater pleasure, than walking through some of the principal streets of London on a fine Sunday, in summer, and watching the cheerful faces of the lively groups with which they are thronged. There is something, to my eyes at least, exceedingly pleasing in the general desire evinced by the humbler classes of society to appear neat and clean on this their only holiday. There are many grave old persons, I know, who shake their heads with an air of profound wisdom, and tell you that poor people dress too well now-a-days; that when they were children, folks knew their stations in life better; that you may depend upon it, no good will come of this sort of thing in the end,—and so forth: but I fancy I can discern in the fine bonnet of the working-man's wife, or the feather-be-dizened hat of his child, no inconsiderable evidence of good feeling on the part of the man himself, and an affectionate desire to expend the few shillings he can spare from his week's wages, in improving the appearance and adding to the happiness of those who are nearest and dearest to him. This may be a very heinous and unbecoming degree of vanity, perhaps, and the money might possibly be applied to better uses; it must not be forgotten, however, that it might very easily be devoted to worse: and if two or three faces can be rendered happy and contented, by a trifling improvement of outward appearance, I cannot help thinking that the object is very cheaply purchased, even at the expense of a smart gown, or a gaudy riband. There is a great deal of very unnecessary cant about the overdressing of the common people. There is not a manufacturer or tradesman in existence, who would not employ a man who takes a reasonable degree of pride in the appearance of himself and those about him, in preference to a sullen slovenly fellow, who works doggedly on, regardless of his own clothing and that of his wife and children, and seeming to take pleasure or pride in nothing.

The pampered aristocrat, whose life is one continued round of licentious pleasures and sensual gratifications; or the gloomy enthusiast, who detests the cheerful amusements he can never enjoy, and envies the healthy feelings he can never know, and who would put down the one and suppress the other, until he made the minds of his fellow-beings as besotted and distorted as his own;—neither of these men can by possibility form an adequate notion of what Sunday really is, to those whose lives are spent in sedentary or laborious occupations, and who are accustomed to look forward to it through their whole existence, as the only day of rest from toil, and innocent enjoyment.

The sun that rises over the quiet streets of London on a bright Sunday morning, shines till his setting, on gay and happy faces. Here and there, so early as six o'clock, a young man and woman in their best attire may be seen hurrying along on their way to the house of some acquaintance, who is included in their scheme of pleasure for the day; from whence, after stopping to take "a bit of breakfast," they sally forth, accompanied by several old people, and a whole crowd of young ones, bearing large hand-baskets full of provisions, and Belcher handkerchiefs done up in bundles, with the neck of a bottle sticking out at the top, and closely-packed apples bulging out at the sides,—and away they hurry along the streets leading to the steam-packet wharfs, which are already plentifully sprinkled with parties bound for the same destination. Their good humour and delight know no bounds—for it is a delightful morning, all blue over head, and nothing like a cloud in the whole sky; and even the air of the river at London Bridge is something to them, shut up as they have been, all the week, in close streets and heated rooms. There are dozens of steamers to all sorts of places—Gravesend, Greenwich, and Richmond; and such numbers of people, that when you have once sat down on the deck, it is all but a moral impossibility to get up again—to say nothing of walking about, which is entirely out of the question. Away they go, joking and laughing, and eating and drinking, and admiring everything they see, and pleased with everything they hear, to climb Windmill Hill, and catch a glimpse of the rich corn-fields and beautiful orchards of Kent; or to stroll among the fine old trees of Greenwich Park, and survey the wonders of Shooter's Hill and Lady James's Folly; or to glide past the beautiful meadows of Twickenham and Richmond, and to gaze with a delight which only people like them can know, on every lovely object in the fair prospect around. Boat follows boat, and coach succeeds coach, for the next three hours; but all are filled, and all with the same kind of people—neat and clean, cheerful and contented.

They reach their places of destination, and the taverns are crowded; but there is no drunkenness or brawling, for the class of men who commit the enormity of making Sunday excursions, take their families with them: and this in itself would be a check upon them, even if they were inclined to dissipation, which they really are not. Boisterous their mirth may be, for they have all the excitement of feeling that fresh air and green fields can impart to the dwellers in crowded cities, but it is innocent and harmless. The glass is circulated, and the joke goes round; but the one is free from excess, and the other from offence; and nothing but good humour and hilarity prevail.

In streets like Holborn and Tottenham Court Road, which form the central market of a large neighbourhood, inhabited by a vast number of mechanics and poor people, a few shops are open at an early hour of the morning; and a very poor man, with a thin and sickly woman by his side, may be seen with their little basket in hand, purchasing the scanty quantity of necessaries they can afford, which the time at which the man receives his wages, or his having a good deal of work to do, or the woman's having been out charing till a late hour, prevented their procuring over-night. The coffee-shops too, at which clerks and young men employed in counting-houses can procure their breakfasts, are also open. This class comprises, in a place like London, an enormous number of people, whose limited means prevent their engaging for their lodgings any other apartment than a bedroom, and who have consequently no alternative but to take their breakfasts at a coffee-shop, or go without it altogether. All these places, however, are quickly closed; and by the time the church bells begin to ring, all appearance of traffic has ceased. And then what are the signs of immorality that meet the eye? Churches are well filled, and Dissenters' chapels are crowded to suffocation. There is no preaching to empty benches, while the drunken and dissolute populace run riot in the streets.

Here is a fashionable church, where the service commences at a late hour, for the accommodation of such members of the congregation—and they are not a few—as may happen to have lingered at the Opera far into the morning of the Sabbath; an excellent contrivance for poising the balance between God and Mammon, and illustrating the ease with which a man's duties to both may be accommodated and adjusted. How the carriages rattle up, and deposit their richly-dressed burdens beneath the lofty portico! The powdered footmen glide along the aisle, place the richly-bound prayer-books on the pew desks, slam the doors, and hurry away, leaving the fashionable members of the congregation to inspect each other through their glasses, and to dazzle and glitter in the eyes of the few shabby people in the free seats. The organ peals forth, the hired singers commence a short hymn, and the congregation condescendingly rise, stare about them, and converse in whispers. The clergyman enters the reading-desk,—a young man of noble family and elegant demeanour, notorious at Cambridge for his knowledge of horse-flesh and dancers, and celebrated at Eton for his hopeless stupidity. The service commences. Mark the soft voice in which he reads, and the impressive manner in which he applies his white hand, studded with brilliants, to his perfumed hair. Observe the graceful emphasis with which he offers up the prayers for the King, the Royal Family, and all the Nobility; and the nonchalance with which he hurries over the more uncomfortable portions of the service, the seventh commandment for instance, with a studied regard for the taste and feeling of his auditors, only to be equalled by that displayed by the sleek divine who succeeds him, who murmurs, in a voice kept down by rich feeding, most comfortable doctrines for exactly twelve minutes, and then arrives at the anxiously expected "Now to God," which is the signal for the dismissal of the congregation. The organ is again heard; those who have been asleep wake up, and those who have kept awake, smile and seem greatly relieved; bows and congratulations are exchanged, the livery servants are all bustle and commotion, bang go the steps, up jump the footmen, and off rattle the carriages: the inmates discoursing on the dresses of the congregation, and congratulating themselves on having set so excellent an example to the community in general, and Sunday-pleasurers in particular.

Enter a less orthodox place of religious worship, and observe the contrast. A small close chapel with a white-washed wall, and plain deal pews and pulpit, contains a closely-packed congregation, as different in dress as they are opposed in manner, to that we have just quitted. The hymn is sung—not by paid singers, but by the whole assembly at the loudest pitch of their voices, unaccompanied by any musical instrument, the words being given out, two lines at a time, by the clerk. There is something in the sonorous quavering of the harsh voices, in the lank and hollow faces of the men, and the sour solemnity of the women, which bespeaks this a stronghold of intolerant zeal and ignorant enthusiasm. The preacher enters the pulpit. He is a coarse, hard-faced man of forbidding aspect, clad in rusty black, and bearing in his hand a small plain Bible from which he selects some passage for his text, while the hymn is concluding. The congregation fall upon their knees, and are hushed into profound stillness as he delivers an extempore prayer, in which he calls upon the Sacred Founder of the Christian faith to bless his ministry, in terms of disgusting and impious familiarity not to be described. He begins his oration in a drawling tone, and his hearers listen with silent attention. He grows warmer as he proceeds with his subject, and his gesticulation becomes proportionately violent. He clenches his fists, beats the book upon the desk before him, and swings his arms wildly about his head. The congregation murmur their acquiescence in his doctrines; and a short groan occasionally bears testimony to the moving nature of his eloquence. Encouraged by these symptoms of approval, and working himself up to a pitch of enthusiasm amounting almost to frenzy, he denounces Sabbath-breakers with the direst vengeance of offended Heaven. He stretches his body half out of the pulpit, thrusts forth his arms with frantic gestures, and blasphemously calls upon the Deity to visit with eternal torments those who turn aside from the word, as interpreted and preached by —himself. A low moaning is heard, the women rock their bodies to and fro, and wring their hands; the preacher's fervour increases, the perspiration starts upon his brow, his face is flushed, and he clenches his hands convulsively, as he draws a hideous and appalling picture of the horrors preparing for the wicked in a future state. A great excitement is visible among his hearers, a scream is heard, and some young girl falls senseless on the floor. There is a momentary rustle, but it is only for a moment—all eyes are turned towards the preacher. He pauses, passes his handkerchief across his face, and looks complacently round. His voice resumes its natural tone, as with mock humility he offers up a thanksgiving for having been successful in his efforts, and having been permitted to rescue one sinner from the path of evil. He sinks back into his seat, exhausted with the violence of his ravings; the girl is removed, a hymn is sung, a petition for some measure for securing the better observance of the Sabbath, which has been prepared by the good man, is read; and his worshipping admirers struggle who shall be the first to sign it.

But the morning service has concluded, and the streets are again crowded with people. Long rows of cleanly-dressed charity children, preceded by a portly beadle and a withered schoolmaster, are returning to their welcome dinner; and it is evident, from the number of men with beer-trays who are running from house to house, that no inconsiderable portion of the population are about to take theirs at this early hour. The baker's shops, in the humbler suburbs especially, are filled with men, women, and children, each anxiously waiting for the Sunday dinner. Look at the group of children who surround that working man who has just emerged from the baker's shop at the corner of the street, with the reeking dish, in which a diminutive joint of mutton simmers above a vast heap of half-browned potatoes. How the young rogues clap their hands, and dance round their father, for very joy at the prospect of the feast: and how anxiously the youngest and chubbiest of the lot lingers on tiptoe by his side, trying to get a peep into the interior of the dish. They turn up the street, and the chubby-faced boy trots on as fast as his little legs will carry him, to herald the approach of the dinner to "Mother" who is standing with a baby in her arms on the doorstep, and who seems almost as pleased with the whole scene as the children themselves; whereupon "baby" not precisely understanding the importance of the business in hand, but clearly perceiving that it is something unusually lively, kicks and crows most lustily, to the unspeakable delight of all the children and both the parents: and the dinner is borne into the house amidst a shouting of small voices, and jumping of fat legs, which would fill Sir Andrew Agnew with astonishment; as well it might, seeing that Baronets, generally speaking, eat pretty comfortable dinners all the week through, and cannot be expected to understand what people feel, who only have a meat dinner on one day out of every seven.

The bakings being all duly consigned to their respective owners, and the beer-man having gone his rounds, the church bells ring for afternoon service, the shops are again closed, and the streets are more than ever thronged with people; some who have not been to church in the morning, going to it now; others who have been to church, going out for a walk; and others—let us admit the full measure of their guilt—going for a walk, who have not been to church at all. I am afraid the smart servant of all work, who has been loitering at the corner of the square for the last ten minutes, is one of the latter class. She is evidently waiting for somebody, and though she may have made up her mind to go to church with him one of these mornings, I don't think they have any such intention on this particular afternoon. Here he is, at last. The white trousers, blue coat, and yellow waistcoat—and more especially that cock of the hat—indicate, as surely as inanimate object can, that Chalk Farm and not the parish church is their destination. The girl colours up, and puts out her hand with a very awkward affection of indifference. He gives it a gallant squeeze, and away they walk, arm in arm, the girl just looking towards her "place" with an air of conscious self-importance, and nodding to her fellow-servant who has gone up to the two-pair-of-stairs window, to take a full view of "Mary's young man," which being communicated to William, he takes off his hat to the fellow-servant: a proceeding which affords unmitigated satisfaction to all parties, and impels the fellow-servant to inform Miss Emily confidentially, in the course of the evening, "that the young man as Mary keeps company with, is one of the most genteelest young men as ever she see."

The two young people who have just crossed the road, and are following this happy couple down the street, are a fair specimen of another class of Sunday-pleasurers. There is a dapper smartness, struggling through very limited means, about the young man, which induces one to set him down at once as a junior clerk to a tradesman or attorney. The girl no one could possibly mistake. You may tell a young woman in the employment of a large dress-maker, at any time, by a certain neatness of cheap finery and humble following of fashion which pervade her whole attire; but unfortunately there are other tokens not to be misunderstood—the pale face with its hectic bloom, the slight distortion of form which no artifice of dress can wholly conceal, the unhealthy stoop, and the short cough—the effects of hard work and close application to a sedentary employment, upon a tender frame. They turn towards the fields. The girl's countenance brightens, and an unwonted glow rises in her face. They are going to Hampstead or Highgate, to spend their holiday afternoon in some place where they can see the sky, the fields, and trees, and breathe for an hour or two the pure air, which so seldom plays upon that poor girl's form, or exhilarates her spirits.

I would to God, that the iron-hearted man who would deprive such people as these of their only pleasures, could feel the sinking of heart and soul, the wasting exhaustion of mind and body, the utter prostration of present strength and future hope, attendant upon that incessant toil which lasts from day to day, and from month to month; that toil which is too often protracted until the silence of midnight, and resumed with the first stir of morning. How marvellously would his ardent zeal for other men's souls diminish after a short probation, and how enlightened and comprehensive would his views of the real object and meaning of the institution of the Sabbath become!

The afternoon is far advanced—the parks and public drives are crowded. Carriages, gigs, phaetons, stanhopes, and vehicles of every description, glide smoothly on. The promenades are filled with loungers on foot, and the road is thronged with loungers on horseback. Persons of every class are crowded together, here, in one dense mass. The plebeian, who takes his pleasure on no day but Sunday, jostles the patrician, who takes his from year's end to year's end. You look in vain for any outward signs of profligacy or debauchery. You see nothing before you but a vast number of people, the denizens of a large and crowded city, in the needful and rational enjoyment of air and exercise.

It grows dusk. The roads leading from the different places of suburban resort, are crowded with people on their return home, and the sound of merry voices rings through the gradually darkening fields. The evening is hot and sultry. The rich man throws open the sashes of his spacious dining-room, and quaffs his iced wine in splendid luxury. The poor man, who has no room to take his meals in, but the close apartment to which he and his family have been confined throughout the week, sits in the tea-garden of some famous tavern, and drinks his beer in content and comfort. The fields and roads are gradually deserted, the crowd once more pour into the streets, and disperse to their several homes; and by midnight all is silent and quiet, save where a few stragglers linger beneath the window of some great man's house, to listen to the strains of music from within, or stop to gaze upon the splendid carriages which are waiting to convey the guests from the dinner-party of an Earl.

There is a darker side to this picture, on which, so far from its being any part of my purpose to conceal it, I wish to lay particular stress. In some parts of London, and in many of the manufacturing towns of England, drunkenness and profligacy in their most disgusting forms, exhibit in the open streets on Sunday a sad and a degrading spectacle. We need go no farther than St. Giles's, or Drury Lane, for sights and scenes of a most repulsive nature. Women with scarcely the articles of apparel which common decency requires, with forms bloated by disease, and faces rendered hideous by habitual drunkenness—men reeling and staggering along—children in rags and filth—whole streets of squalid and miserable appearance, whose inhabitants are lounging in the public road, fighting, screaming, and swearing—these are the common objects which present themselves in, these are the well-known characteristics of, that portion of London to which I have just referred.

And why is it that all well-disposed persons are shocked, and public decency scandalised, by such exhibitions?

These people are poor—that is notorious. It may be said that they spend in liquor, money with which they might purchase necessaries, and there is no denying the fact; but let it be remembered that even if they applied every farthing of their earnings in the best possible way, they would still be very, very poor. Their dwellings are necessarily uncomfortable, and to a certain degree unhealthy. Cleanliness might do much, but they are too crowded together, the streets are too narrow, and the rooms too small, to admit of their ever being rendered desirable habitations. They work very hard all the week. We know that the effect of prolonged and arduous labour is to produce, when a period of rest does arrive, a sensation of lassitude which it requires the application of some stimulus to overcome.

What stimulus have they? Sunday comes, and with it a cessation of labour. How are they to employ the day, or what inducement have they to employ it in recruiting their stock of health? They see little parties, on pleasure excursions, passing through the streets; but they cannot imitate their example, for they have not the means. They may walk, to be sure, but it is exactly the inducement to walk that they require. If every one of these men knew that by taking the trouble to walk two or three miles he would be enabled to share in a good game of cricket, or some athletic sport, I very much question whether any of them would remain at home.

But you hold out no inducement, you offer no relief from listlessness, you provide nothing to amuse his mind, you afford him no means of exercising his body. Unwashed and unshaven, he saunters moodily about, weary and dejected. In lieu of the wholesome stimulus he might derive from nature, you drive him to the pernicious excitement to be gained from art. He flies to the gin-shop as his only resource; and when, reduced to a worse level than the lowest brute in the scale of creation, he lies wallowing in the kennel, your saintly lawgivers lift up their hands to heaven, and exclaim for a law which shall convert the day intended for rest and cheerfulness, into one of universal gloom, bigotry, and persecution.

II

AS SABBATH BILLS WOULD MAKE IT

The provisions of the bill introduced into the House of Commons by Sir Andrew Agnew, and thrown out by that House on the motion for the second reading, on the 18th of May in the present year, by a majority of 32, may very fairly be taken as a test of the length to which the fanatics, of which the honourable Baronet is the distinguished leader, are prepared to go. No test can be fairer; because while on the one hand this measure may be supposed to exhibit all that improvement which mature reflection and long deliberation may have suggested, so on the other it may very reasonably be inferred, that if it be quite as severe in its provisions, and to the full as partial in its operation, as those which have preceded it, and experienced a similar fate, the disease under which the honourable Baronet and his friends labour, is perfectly hopeless, and beyond the reach of cure.

The proposed enactments of the bill are briefly these:—All work is prohibited on the Lord's day, under heavy penalties, increasing with every repetition of the offence. There are penalties for keeping shops open—penalties for drunkenness—penalties for keeping open houses of entertainment—penalties for being present at any public meeting or assembly—penalties for letting carriages, and penalties for hiring them—penalties for travelling in steam-boats, and penalties for taking passengers—penalties on vessels commencing their voyage on Sunday—penalties on the owners of cattle who suffer them to be driven on the Lord's day—penalties on constables who refuse to act, and penalties for resisting them when they do. In addition to these trifles, the constables are invested with arbitrary, vexatious, and most extensive powers; and all this in a bill which sets out with a hypocritical and canting declaration that "nothing is more acceptable to God than the *true and sincere* worship of Him according to His holy will, and that it is the bounden duty of Parliament to promote the observance of the Lord's day, by protecting every class of society against being required to sacrifice their comfort, health, religious privileges, and conscience, for the convenience, enjoyment, or supposed advantage of any other class on the Lord's day"! The idea of making a man truly moral through the ministry of constables, and sincerely religious under the influence of penalties, is worthy of the mind which could form such a mass of monstrous absurdity as this bill is composed of.

The House of Commons threw the measure out certainly, and by so doing retrieved the disgrace—so far as it could be retrieved—of placing among the printed papers of Parliament, such an egregious specimen of legislative folly; but there was a degree of delicacy and forbearance about the debate that took place, which I cannot help thinking as unnecessary and uncalled for, as it is unusual in Parliamentary discussions. If it had been the first time of Sir Andrew Agnew's attempting to palm such a measure upon the country, we might well understand, and duly appreciate, the delicate and compassionate feeling due to the supposed weakness and imbecility of the man, which prevented his proposition being exposed in its true colours, and induced this Hon. Member to bear testimony to his excellent motives, and that Noble Lord to regret that he could not—although he had tried to do so—adopt any portion of the bill. But when these attempts have been repeated again and again; when Sir Andrew Agnew has renewed them session after session, and when it has become palpably evident to the whole House that

> His impudence of proof in every trial,
> Kens no polite, and heeds no plain denial—

it really becomes high time to speak of him and his legislation, as they appear to deserve, without that gloss of politeness, which is all very well in an ordinary case, but rather out of place when the liberties and comforts of a whole people are at stake.

In the first place, it is by no means the worst characteristic of this bill, that it is a bill of blunders: it is, from beginning to end, a piece of deliberate cruelty, and crafty injustice. If the rich composed the whole population of this country, not a single comfort of one single man would be affected by it. It is directed exclusively, and without the exception of a solitary instance, against the amusements and recreations of the poor. This was the bait held out by the Hon. Baronet to a body of men, who cannot be supposed to have any very strong sympathies in common with the poor, because they cannot understand their sufferings or their struggles. This is the bait, which will in time prevail, unless public attention is awakened, and public feeling exerted, to prevent it.

Take the very first clause, the provision that no man shall be allowed to work on Sunday—"That no person, upon the Lord's day, shall do, or hire, or employ any person to do any manner of labour, or any work of his or her ordinary calling." What class of persons does this affect? The rich man? No. Menial servants, both male and female, are specially exempted from the operation of the bill. "Menial servants" are among the poor people. The bill has no regard for them. The Baronet's dinner must be cooked on Sunday, the Bishop's horses must be groomed, and the Peer's carriage must be driven. So the menial servants are put utterly beyond the pale of grace;—unless indeed, they are to go to heaven through the sanctity of their masters, and possibly they might think even that rather an uncertain passport.

There is a penalty for keeping open houses of entertainment. Now, suppose the bill had passed, and that half-a-dozen adventurous licensed victuallers, relying upon the excitement of public feeling on the subject, and the consequent difficulty of conviction (this is by no means an improbable supposition), had determined to keep their houses and gardens open, through the whole Sunday afternoon, in defiance of the law. Every act of hiring or working, every act of buying or selling, or delivering, or causing anything to be bought or sold, is specifically made a separate offence—mark the effect. A party, a man and his wife and children, enter a tea-garden, and the informer stations himself in the next box, from whence he can see and hear everything that passes. "Waiter!" says the father. "Yes, Sir." "Pint of the best ale!" "Yes, Sir." Away runs the waiter to the bar, and gets the ale from the landlord. Out comes the informer's note-book—penalty on the father for hiring, on the waiter for delivering, and on the landlord for selling, on the Lord's day. But it does not stop here. The waiter delivers the ale, and darts off, little suspecting the penalties in store for him. "Hollo," cries the father, "waiter!" "Yes, Sir." "Just get this little boy a biscuit, will you?" "Yes, Sir." Off runs the waiter again, and down goes another case of hiring, another case of delivering, and another case of selling; and so it would go on *ad infinitum*, the sum and substance of the matter being, that every time a man or woman cried "Waiter!" on Sunday, he or she would be fined not less than forty shillings, nor more than a hundred; and every time a waiter replied, "Yes, Sir," he and his master would be fined in the same amount: with the addition of a new sort of window duty on the landlord, to wit, a tax of twenty shillings an hour for every hour beyond the first one, during which he should have his shutters down on the Sabbath.

With one exception, there are perhaps no clauses in the whole bill, so strongly illustrative of its partial operation, and the intention of its framer, as those which relate to travelling on Sunday. Penalties of ten, twenty, and thirty pounds, are mercilessly imposed upon coach proprietors who shall run their coaches on the Sabbath; one, two, and ten pounds upon those who hire, or let to hire, horses and carriages upon the Lord's day, but not one syllable about those who have no necessity to hire, because they have carriages and horses of their own; not one word of a penalty on liveried coachmen and footmen. The whole of the saintly venom is directed against the hired cabriolet, the humble fly, or the rumbling hackney-coach, which enables a man of the poorer class to escape for a few hours from the smoke and dirt, in the midst of which he has been confined throughout the week: while the escutcheoned carriage and the dashing cab may whirl their wealthy owners to Sunday feasts and private oratorios, setting constables, informers, and penalties, at defiance. Again, in the description of the places of public resort which it is rendered criminal to attend on Sunday, there are no words comprising a very fashionable promenade. Public discussions, public debates, public lectures and speeches, are cautiously guarded against; for it is by their means that the people become enlightened enough to deride the last efforts of bigotry and superstition. There is a stringent provision for punishing the poor man who spends an hour in a newsroom, but there is nothing to prevent the rich one from lounging away the day in the Zoological Gardens.

There is, in four words, a mock proviso, which affects to forbid travelling "with any animal" on the Lord's day. This, however, is revoked, as relates to the rich man, by a subsequent provision. We have then a penalty of not less than fifty, nor more than one hundred pounds, upon any person participating in the control, or having the command of any vessel which shall commence her voyage on the Lord's day, should the wind prove favourable. The next time this bill is brought forward (which will no doubt be at an early period of the next session of Parliament) perhaps it will be better to amend this clause by declaring, that from and after the passing of the act, it shall be deemed unlawful for the wind to blow at all upon the Sabbath. It would remove a great deal of temptation from the owners and captains of vessels.

The reader is now in possession of the principal enacting clauses of Sir Andrew Agnew's bill, with the exception of one, for preventing the killing or taking of "*fish, or other wild animals*," and the ordinary provisions which are inserted for form's sake in all acts of Parliament. I now beg his attention to the clauses of exemption.

They are two in number. The first exempts menial servants from any rest, and all poor men from any recreation: outlaws a milkman after nine o'clock in the morning, and makes eating-houses lawful for only two hours in the afternoon; permits a medical man to use his carriage on Sunday, and declares that a clergyman may either use his own, or hire one.

The second is artful, cunning, and designing; shielding the rich man from the possibility of being entrapped, and affecting at the same time, to have a tender and scrupulous regard for the interests of the whole community. It declares, "that nothing in this act contained, shall extend to works of piety, charity, or necessity."

What is meant by the word "necessity" in this clause? Simply this—that the rich man shall be at liberty to make use of all the splendid luxuries he has collected around him, on any day in the week, because habit and custom have rendered them "necessary" to his easy existence; but that the poor man who saves his money to provide some little pleasure for himself and family at lengthened intervals, shall not be permitted to enjoy it. It is not "necessary" to him:—Heaven knows, he very often goes long enough without it. This is the plain English of the clause. The carriage and pair of horses, the coachman, the footman, the helper, and the groom, are "necessary" on Sundays, as on other days, to the bishop and the nobleman; but the hackney-coach, the hired gig, or the taxed cart, cannot possibly be "necessary" to the working-man on Sunday, for he has it not at other times. The sumptuous dinner and the rich wines are "necessaries" to a great man in his own mansion: but the pint of beer and the plate of meat degrade the national character in an eating-house.

Such is the bill for promoting the true and sincere worship of God according to his Holy Will, and for protecting every class of society against being required to sacrifice their health and comfort on the Sabbath. Instances in which its operation would be as unjust as it would be absurd, might be multiplied to an endless amount; but it is sufficient to place its leading provisions before the reader. In doing so, I have purposely abstained from drawing upon the imagination for possible cases; the provisions to which I have referred, stand in so many words upon the bill as printed by order of the House of Commons; and they can neither be disowned nor explained away.

Let us suppose such a bill as this to have actually passed both branches of the legislature; to have received the royal assent; and to have come into operation. Imagine its effect in a great city like London.

Sunday comes, and brings with it a day of general gloom and austerity. The man who has been toiling hard all the week, has been looking towards the Sabbath, not as to a day of rest from labour, and healthy recreation, but as one of grievous tyranny and grinding oppression. The day which his Maker intended as a blessing, man has converted into a curse. Instead of being hailed by him as his period of relaxation, he finds it remarkable only as depriving him of every comfort and enjoyment. He has many children about him all sent into the world at an early age to struggle for a livelihood; one is kept in a warehouse all day, with an interval of rest too short to enable him to reach home, another walks four or five miles to his employment at the docks, a third earns a few shillings weekly as an errand boy, or office messenger; and the employment of the man himself, detains him at some distance from his home from morning till night. Sunday is the only day on which they could all meet together, and enjoy a homely meal in social comfort; and now they sit down to a cold and cheerless dinner: the pious guardians of the man's salvation having, in their regard for the welfare of his precious soul, shut up the bakers' shops. The fire blazes high in the kitchen chimney of these well-fed hypocrites, and the rich steams of the savoury dinner scent the air. What care they to be told that this class of men have neither a place to cook in—nor means to bear the expense, if they had?

Look into your churches—diminished congregations, and scanty attendance. People have grown sullen and obstinate, and are becoming disgusted with the faith which condemns them to such a day as this, once in every seven. And as you cannot make people religious by Act of Parliament, or force them to church by constables, they display their feeling by staying away.

Turn into the streets, and mark the rigid gloom that reigns over everything around. The roads are empty, the fields are deserted, the houses of entertainment are closed. Groups of filthy and discontented-looking men are idling about at the street corners, or sleeping in the sun; but there are no decently-dressed people of the poorer class passing to and fro. Where should they walk to? It would take them an hour, at least, to get into the fields, and when they reached them they could procure neither bite nor sup without the informer and the penalty. Now and then a carriage rolls smoothly on, or a well-mounted horseman, followed by a liveried attendant, canters by; but with these exceptions, all is as melancholy and quiet as if a pestilence had fallen on the city.

Bend your steps through the narrow and thickly-inhabited streets, and observe the sallow faces of the men and women who are lounging at the doors, or lolling from the windows. Regard well the closeness of these crowded rooms, and the noisome exhalations that rise from the drains and kennels; and then laud the triumph of religion and morality, which condemns people to drag their lives out in such stews as these, and makes it criminal for them to eat or drink in the fresh air, or under the clear sky. Here and there, from some half opened window, the loud shout of drunken revelry strikes upon the ear, and the noise of oaths and quarrelling—the effect of the close and heated atmosphere—is heard on all sides. See how the men all rush to join the crowd that are making their way down the street, and how loud the execrations of the mob become as they draw nearer. They have assembled round a little knot of constables, who have seized the stock-in-trade, heinously exposed on Sunday, of some miserable walking-stick seller, who follows clamouring for his property. The dispute grows warmer and fiercer, until at last some of the more furious among the crowd rush forward to restore the goods to their owner. A general conflict takes place; the sticks of the constables are exercised in all directions; fresh assistance is procured; and half a dozen of the assailants are conveyed to the station-house struggling, bleeding, and cursing. The case is taken to the police-office on the following morning; and after a frightful amount of perjury on both sides, the men are sent to prison for resisting the officers, their families to the workhouse to keep them from starving: and there they both remain for a month afterwards, glorious trophies of the sanctified enforcement of the Christian Sabbath. Add to such scenes as these the profligacy, idleness, drunkenness, and vice, that will be committed to an extent which no man can foresee, on Monday, as an atonement for the restraint of the preceding day; and you have a very faint and imperfect picture of the religious effects of this Sunday legislation, supposing it could ever be forced upon the people.

But let those who advocate the cause of fanaticism reflect well upon the probable issue of their endeavours. They may by perseverance, succeed with Parliament. Let them ponder on the probability of succeeding with the people. You may deny the concession of a political question for a time, and a nation will bear it patiently. Strike home to the comforts of every man's fireside—tamper with every man's freedom and liberty—and one month, one week, may rouse a feeling abroad which a king would gladly yield his crown to quell, and a peer would resign his coronet to allay.

It is the custom to affect a deference for the motives of those who advocate these measures, and a respect for the feelings by which they are actuated. They do not deserve it. If they legislate in ignorance, they are criminal and dishonest; if they do so with their eyes open, they commit wilful injustice; in either case, they bring religion into contempt. But they do NOT legislate in ignorance. Public prints, and public men, have pointed out to them again and again the consequences of their proceedings. If they persist in thrusting themselves forward, let those consequences rest upon their own heads, and let them be content to stand upon their own merits.

It may be asked, what motives can actuate a man who has so little regard for the comfort of his fellow-beings, so little respect for their wants and necessities, and so distorted a notion of the beneficence of his Creator. I reply, an envious, heartless, ill-conditioned dislike to seeing those whom fortune has placed below him, cheerful and happy —an intolerant confidence in his own high worthiness before God, and a lofty impression of the demerits of others—pride, selfish pride, as inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity itself, as opposed to the example of its Founder upon earth.

To these may be added another class of men—the stern and gloomy enthusiasts, who would make earth a hell, and religion a torment: men who, having wasted the earlier part of their lives in dissipation and depravity, find themselves when scarcely past its meridan, steeped to the neck in vice, and shunned like a loathsome disease. Abandoned by the world, having nothing to fall back upon, nothing to remember but time mis-spent, and energies misdirected, they turn their eyes and not their thoughts to Heaven, and delude themselves into the impious belief, that in denouncing the lightness of heart of which they cannot partake, and the rational pleasures from which they never derived enjoyment, they are more than remedying the sins of their old career, and—like the founders of monasteries and builders of churches, in ruder days—establishing a good set claim upon their Maker.

III

AS IT MIGHT BE MADE

THE supporters of Sabbath Bills, and more especially the extreme class of Dissenters, lay great stress upon the declarations occasionally made by criminals from the condemned cell or the scaffold, that to Sabbath-breaking they attribute their first deviation from the path of rectitude; and they point to these statements, as an incontestable proof of the evil consequences which await a departure from that strict and rigid observance of the Sabbath, which they uphold. I cannot help thinking that in this, as in almost every other respect connected with the subject, there is a considerable degree of cant, and a very great deal of wilful blindness. If a man be viciously disposed—and with very few exceptions, not a man died by the executioner's hands, who has not been in one way or other a most abandoned and profligate character for many years—if a man be viciously disposed, there is no doubt that he will turn his Sunday to bad account, that he will take advantage of it to dissipate with other bad characters as vile as himself; and that in this way he may trace his first yielding to temptation, possibly his first commission of crime, to an infringement of the Sabbath. But this would be an argument against any holiday at all. If his holiday had been Wednesday instead of Sunday, and he had devoted it to the same improper uses, it would have been productive of the same results. It is too much to judge of the character of a whole people by the confessions of the very worst members of society. It is not fair to cry down things which are harmless in themselves, because evil-disposed men may turn them to bad account. Who ever thought of deprecating the teaching poor people to write because some porter in a warehouse had committed forgery? Or into what man's head did it ever enter, to prevent the crowding of churches because it afforded a temptation for the picking of pockets?

When the Book of Sports, for allowing the peasantry of England to divert themselves with certain games in the open air, on Sundays, after evening service, was published by Charles the First, it is needless to say the English people were comparatively rude and uncivilised. And yet it is extraordinary to how few excesses it gave rise, even in that day, when men's minds were not enlightened, or their passions moderated, by the influence of education and refinement. That some excesses were committed through its means, in the remoter parts of the country, and that it was discontinued in those places in consequence, cannot be denied: but generally speaking, there is no proof whatever on record, of its having had any tendency to increase crime, or to lower the character of the people.

The Puritans of that time were as much opposed to harmless recreations and healthful amusements as those of the present day, and it is amusing to observe that each in their generation advance precisely the same description of arguments. In the British Museum there is a curious pamphlet got up by the Agnews of Charles's time, entitled "A Divine Tragedie lately acted, or a Collection of sundry memorable examples of God's Judgements upon Sabbath Breakers, and other like Libertines in their unlawful Sports, happening within the realme of England, in the compass only of two yeares last past, since the Booke (of Sports) was published, worthy to be knowne and considered of all men, especially such who are guilty of the sinne, or archpatrons thereof." This amusing document contains some fifty or sixty veritable accounts of balls of fire that fell into churchyards and upset the sporters, and sporters that quarrelled and upset one another, and so forth: and among them is one anecdote containing an example of a rather different kind, which I cannot resist the temptation of quoting, as strongly illustrative of the fact, that this blinking of the question has not even the recommendation of novelty.

"A woman about Northampton, the same day that she heard the booke for sports read, went immediately, and having 3. pence in her purse, hired a fellow to goe to the next towne to fetch a Minstrell, who coming, she with others fell a dauncing, which continued within night; at which time shee was got with child, which at the birth shee murthering, was detected and apprehended, and being convented before the justice, shee confessed it, and withal told the occasion of it, saying it was her falling to sport on the Sabbath, upon the reading of the Booke, so as for this treble, sinfull act, her presumptuous profaning of the Sabbath, w$^{h.}$ brought her adultory and that murther. Shee was according to the Law both of God and man, put to death. Much sinne and misery followeth upon Sabbath-breaking."

It is needless to say that if the young lady near Northampton had "fallen to sport" of such a dangerous description, on any other day but Sunday, the first result would probably have been the same: it never having been distinctly shown that Sunday is more favourable to the propagation of the human race than any other day in the week. The second result—the murder of the child—does not speak very highly for the amiability of her natural disposition; and the whole story, supposing it to have had any foundation at all, is about as much chargeable upon the Book of Sports, as upon the Book of Kings. Such "sports" have taken place in Dissenting Chapels before now; but religion has never been blamed in consequence; nor has it been proposed to shut up the chapels on that account.

The question, then, very fairly arises, whether we have any reason to suppose that allowing games in the open air on Sundays or even providing the means of amusement for the humbler classes of society on that day, would be hurtful and injurious to the character and morals of the people.

I was travelling in the west of England a summer or two back, and was induced by the beauty of the scenery, and the seclusion of the spot, to remain for the night in a small village, distant about seventy miles from London. The next morning was Sunday; and I walked out towards the church. Groups of people—the whole population of the little hamlet apparently—were hastening in the same direction. Cheerful and good-humoured congratulations were heard on all sides, as neighbours overtook each other, and walked on in company. Occasionally I passed an aged couple, whose married daughter and her husband were loitering by the side of the old people, accommodating their rate of walking to their feeble pace, while a little knot of children hurried on before; stout young labourers in clean round frocks; and buxom girls with healthy, laughing faces, were plentifully sprinkled about in couples, and the whole scene was one of quiet and tranquil contentment, irresistibly captivating. The morning was bright and pleasant, the hedges were green and blooming, and a thousand delicious scents were wafted on the air, from the wild flowers which blossomed on either side of the footpath. The little church was one of those venerable simple buildings which abound in the English counties; half overgrown with moss and ivy, and standing in the centre of a little plot of ground, which, but for the green mounds with which it was studded, might have passed for a lovely meadow. I fancied that the old clanking bell which was now summoning the congregation together, would seem less terrible when it rung out the knell of a departed soul, than I had ever deemed possible before—that the sound would tell only of a welcome to calmness and rest, amidst the most peaceful and tranquil scene in nature.

I followed into the church—a low-roofed building with small arched windows, through which the sun's rays streamed upon a plain tablet on the opposite wall, which had once recorded names, now as undistinguishable on its worn surface, as were the bones beneath, from the dust into which they had resolved. The impressive service of the Church of England was spoken—not merely *read*—by a grey-headed minister, and the responses delivered by his auditors, with an air of sincere devotion as far removed from affectation or display, as from coldness or indifference. The psalms were accompanied by a few instrumental performers, who were stationed in a small gallery extending across the church at the lower end, over the door: and the voices were led by the clerk, who it was evident derived no slight pride and gratification from this portion of the service. The discourse was plain, unpretending, and well adapted to the comprehension of the hearers. At the conclusion of the service, the villagers waited in the churchyard to salute the clergyman as he passed; and two or three, I observed, stepped aside, as if communicating some little difficulty, and asking his advice. This, to guess from the homely bows, and other rustic expressions of gratitude, the old gentleman readily conceded. He seemed intimately acquainted with the circumstances of all his parishioners; for I heard him inquire after one man's youngest child, another man's wife, and so forth; and that he was fond of his joke, I discovered from overhearing him ask a stout, fresh-coloured young fellow, with a very pretty bashful-looking girl on his arm, "when those banns were to be put up?"—an inquiry which made the young fellow more fresh-coloured, and the girl more bashful, and which, strange to say, caused a great many other girls who were standing round, to colour up also, and look anywhere but in the faces of their male companions.

As I approached this spot in the evening about half an hour before sunset, I was surprised to hear the hum of voices, and occasionally a shout of merriment from the meadow beyond the churchyard; which I found, when I reached the stile, to be occasioned by a very animated game of cricket, in which the boys and young men of the place were engaged, while the females and old people were scattered about: some seated on the grass watching the progress of the game, and others sauntering about in groups of two or three, gathering little nosegays of wild roses and hedge flowers. I could not but take notice of one old man in particular, with a bright-eyed granddaughter by his side, who was giving a sunburnt young fellow some instructions in the game, which he received with an air of profound deference, but with an occasional glance at the girl, which induced me to think that his attention was rather distracted from the old gentleman's narration of the fruits of his experience. When it was his turn at the wicket, too, there was a glance towards the pair every now and then, which the old grandfather very complacently considered as an appeal to his judgment of a particular hit, but which a certain blush in the girl's face, and a downcast look of the bright eye, led me to believe was intended for somebody else than the old man,—and understood by somebody else, too, or I am much mistaken.

I was in the very height of the pleasure which the contemplation of this scene afforded me, when I saw the old clergyman making his way towards us. I trembled for an angry interruption to the sport, and was almost on the point of crying out, to warn the cricketers of his approach; he was so close upon me, however, that I could do nothing but remain still, and anticipate the reproof that was preparing. What was my agreeable surprise to see the old gentleman standing at the stile, with his hands in his pockets, surveying the whole scene with evident satisfaction! And how dull I must have been, not to have known till my friend the grandfather (who, by-the-bye, said he had been a wonderful cricketer in his time) told me, that it was the clergyman himself who had established the whole thing: that it was his field they played in; and that it was he who had purchased stumps, bats, ball, and all!

It is such scenes as this I would see near London on a Sunday evening. It is such men as this who would do more in one year to make people properly religious, cheerful, and contented, than all the legislation of a century could ever accomplish.

It will be said—it has been very often—that it would be matter of perfect impossibility to make amusements and exercises succeed in large towns, which may be very well adapted to a country population. Here, again, we are called upon to yield to bare assertions on matters of belief and opinion, as if they were established and undoubted facts. That there is a wide difference between the two cases, no one will be prepared to dispute; that the difference is such as to prevent the application of the same principle to both, no reasonable man, I think, will be disposed to maintain. The great majority of the people who make holiday on Sunday now, are industrious, orderly, and well-behaved persons. It is not unreasonable to suppose that they would be no more inclined to an abuse of pleasures provided for them, than they are to an abuse of the pleasures they provide for themselves ; and if any people, for want of something better to do, resort to criminal practices on the Sabbath as at present observed, no better remedy for the evil can be imagined, than giving them the opportunity of doing something which will amuse them, and hurt nobody else.

The propriety of opening the British Museum to respectable people on Sunday, has lately been the subject of some discussion. I think it would puzzle the most austere of the Sunday legislators to assign any valid reason for opposing so sensible a proposition. The Museum contains rich specimens from all the vast museums and repositories of Nature, and rare and curious fragments of the mighty works of art, in bygone ages: all calculated to awaken contemplation and inquiry, and to tend to the enlightenment and improvement of the people. But attendants would be necessary, and a few men would be employed upon the Sabbath. They certainly would; but how many? Why, if the British Museum, and the National Gallery, and the Gallery of Practical Science, and every other exhibition in London, from which knowledge is to be derived and information gained, were to be thrown open on a Sunday afternoon, not fifty people would be required to preside over the whole: and it would take treble the number to enforce a Sabbath bill in any three populous parishes.

I should like to see some large field, or open piece of ground, in every outskirt of London, exhibiting each Sunday evening on a larger scale, the scene of the little country meadow. I should like to see the time arrive, when a man's attendance to his religious duties might be left to that religious feeling which most men possess in a greater or less degree, but which was never forced into the breast of any man by menace or restraint. I should like to see the time when Sunday might be looked forward to, as a recognised day of relaxation and enjoyment, and when every man might feel, what few men do now, that religion is not incompatible with rational pleasure and needful recreation.

How different a picture would the streets and public places then present! The museums, and repositories of scientific and useful inventions, would be crowded with ingenious mechanics and industrious artisans, all anxious for information, and all unable to procure it at any other time. The spacious saloons would be swarming with practical men: humble in appearance, but destined, perhaps, to become the greatest inventors and philosophers of their age. The labourers who now lounge away the day in idleness and intoxication, would be seen hurrying along, with cheerful faces and clean attire, not to the close and smoky atmosphere of the public-house, but to the fresh and airy fields. Fancy the pleasant scene. Throngs of people, pouring out from the lanes and alleys of the metropolis, to various places of common resort at some short distance from the town, to join in the refreshing sports and exercises of the day—the children gambolling in crowds upon the grass, the mothers looking on, and enjoying themselves the little game they seem only to direct; other parties strolling along some pleasant walks, or reposing in the shade of the stately trees; others again intent upon their different amusements. Nothing should be heard on all sides, but the sharp stroke of the bat as it sent the ball skimming along the ground, the clear ring of the quoit, as it struck upon the iron peg: the noisy murmur of many voices, and the loud shout of mirth and delight, which would awaken the echoes far and wide, till the fields rung with it. The day would pass away in a series of enjoyments which would awaken no painful reflections when night arrived; for they would be calculated to bring with them only health and contentment. The young would lose that dread of religion, which the sour austerity of its professors too often inculcates in youthful bosoms; and the old would find less difficulty in persuading them to respect its observances. The drunken and dissipated, deprived of any excuse for their misconduct, would no longer excite pity but disgust. Above all, the more ignorant and humble class of men, who now partake of many of the bitters of life, and taste but few of its sweets, would naturally feel attachment and respect for that code of morality, which, regarding the many hardships of their station, strove to alleviate its rigours, and endeavoured to soften its asperity.

This is what Sunday might be made, and what it might be made without impiety or profanation. The wise and beneficent Creator who places men upon earth, requires that they shall perform the duties of that station of life to which they are called, and He can never intend that the more a man strives to discharge those duties, the more he shall be debarred from happiness and enjoyment. Let those who have six days in the week for all the world's pleasures, appropriate the seventh to fasting and gloom, either for their own sins or those of other people, if they like to bewail them; but let those who employ their six days in a worthier manner, devote their seventh to a different purpose. Let divines set the example of true morality: preach it to their flocks in the morning, and dismiss them to enjoy true rest in the afternoon; and let them select for their text, and let Sunday legislators take for their motto, the words which fell from the lips of that Master, whose precepts they misconstrue, and whose lessons they pervert—"The Sabbath was made for man, and not man to serve the Sabbath."

JOSEPH GRIMALDI

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER TO "MEMOIRS OF JOSEPH GRIMALDI"

[1838]

It is some years now since we first conceived a strong veneration for Clowns, and an intense anxiety to know what they did with themselves out of pantomime time, and off the stage. As a child, we were accustomed to pester our relations and friends with questions out of number concerning these gentry;—whether their appetite for sausages and such-like wares was always the same, and if so, at whose expense they were maintained; whether they were ever taken up for pilfering other people's goods, or were forgiven by everybody because it was only done in fun; how it was they got such beautiful complexions, and where they lived; and whether they were born Clowns, or gradually turned into Clowns as they grew up. On these and a thousand other points our curiosity was insatiable. Nor were our speculations confined to Clowns alone; they extended to Harlequins, Pantaloons, and Columbines, all of whom we believed to be real and veritable personages, existing in the same forms and characters all the year round. How often have we wished that the Pantaloon were our godfather! and how often thought that to marry a Columbine would be to attain the highest pitch of all human felicity!

The delights—the ten thousand million delights of a pantomime—come streaming upon us now,—even of the pantomime which came lumbering down in Richardson's waggons at fair time to the dull little town in which we had the honour to be brought up, and which a long row of small boys, with frills as white as they could be washed, and hands as clean as they would come, were taken to behold the glories of, in fair daylight.

We feel again all the pride of standing in a body on the platform, the observed of all observers in the crowd below, while the junior usher pays away twenty-four ninepences to a stout gentleman under a Gothic arch, with a hoop of variegated lamps swinging over his head. Again we catch a glimpse (too brief, alas!) of the lady with a green parasol in her hand, on the outside stage of the next show but one, who supports herself on one foot, on the back of a majestic horse, blotting-paper coloured and white; and once again our eyes open wide with wonder, and our hearts throb with emotion, as we deliver our cardboard check into the very hands of the Harlequin himself, who, all glittering with spangles, and dazzling with many colours, deigns to give us a word of encouragement and commendation as we pass into the booth!

But what was this—even this—to the glories of the inside, where amid the smell of sawdust, and orange-peel, sweeter far than violets to youthful noses, the first play being over, the lovers united, the ghost appeased, the Baron killed, and everything made comfortable and pleasant,—the pantomime itself began! What words can describe the deep gloom of the opening scene, where a crafty Magician holding a young lady in bondage was discovered, studying an enchanted book to the soft music of a gong!—or in what terms can we express the thrill of ecstasy with which, his magic power opposed by superior art, we beheld the monster himself converted into Clown! What mattered it that the stage was three yards wide, and four deep? *we* never saw it. We had no eyes, ears, or corporeal senses but for the pantomime. And when its short career was run, and the Baron previously slaughtered, coming forward with his hand upon his heart, announced that for that favour Mr. Richardson returned his most sincere thanks, and the performances would commence again in a quarter of an hour, what jest could equal the effects of the Baron's indignation and surprise, when the Clown, unexpectedly peeping from behind the curtain, requested the audience "not to believe it, for it was all gammon!" Who but a Clown could have called forth the roar of laughter that succeeded; and what witchery but a Clown's could have caused the junior usher himself to declare aloud, as he shook his sides and smote his knee in a moment of irrepressible joy, that that was the very best thing he had ever heard said!

We have lost that Clown now; he is still alive though, for we saw him only the day before last Bartholomew Fair, eating a real saveloy, and we are sorry to say he had deserted to the illegitimate drama, for he was seated on one of "Clark's Circus" waggons;—we have lost that Clown and that pantomime, but our relish for the entertainment still remains unimpaired. Each successive Boxing-day finds us in the same state of high excitement and expectation. On that eventful day when new pantomimes are played for the first time at the two great theatres, and at twenty or thirty of the little ones, we still gloat as formerly upon the bills which set forth tempting descriptions of the scenery in staring red and black letters, and still fall down upon our knees, with other men and boys, upon the pavement by shop-doors, to read them down to the very last line. Nay, we still peruse with all eagerness and avidity the exclusive accounts of the coming wonders in the theatrical newspapers of the Sunday before, and still believe them as devoutly as we did before twenty years' experience had shown us that they are always wrong.

With these feelings upon the subject of pantomimes, it is no matter of surprise that when we first heard that Grimaldi had left some memoirs of his life behind him, we were in a perfect fever until we had perused the manuscript. It was no sooner placed in our hands by "the adventurous and spirited Publisher"—(if our recollection serve us, this is the customary style of the complimentary little paragraphs regarding new books which usually precede advertisements about Savory's clocks in the newspapers),—than we sat down at once and read it every word.

See how pleasantly things come about, if you let them take their own course! This mention of the manuscript brings us at once to the very point we are anxious to reach, and which we should have gained long ago, if we had not travelled into those irrelevant remarks concerning Pantomimic representations.

For about a year before his death, Grimaldi was employed in writing a full account of his life and adventures. It was his chief occupation and amusement; and as people who write their own lives, even in the midst of very many occupations, often find time to extend them to a most inordinate length, it is no wonder that his account of himself was exceedingly voluminous.

This manuscript was confided to Mr. Thomas Egerton Wilks, to alter and revise, with a view to its publication. Mr. Wilks, who was well acquainted with Grimaldi and his connexions, applied himself to the task of condensing it throughout, and wholly expunging considerable portions, which, so far as the public were concerned, possessed neither interest nor amusement: he likewise interspersed here and there the substance of such personal anecdotes as he had gleaned from the writer in desultory conversation. While he was thus engaged, Grimaldi died.

Mr. Wilks having by the commencement of September concluded his labours, offered the manuscript to the present publisher, by whom it was shortly afterwards purchased unconditionally, with the full consent and concurrence of Mr. Richard Hughes, Grimaldi's executor.

The present Editor of these volumes has felt it necessary to say thus much in explanation of their origin, in order to establish beyond doubt, the unquestionable authenticity of the memoirs they contain.

His own share in them is stated in a few words. Being much struck by several incidents in the manuscript—such as the description of Grimaldi's infancy, the burglary, the brother's return from sea under the extraordinary circumstances detailed, the adventure of the man with the two fingers on his left hand, the account of Mackintosh and his friends, and many other passages,—and thinking that they might be related in a more attractive manner (they were at that time told in the first person, as if by Grimaldi himself, although they had necessarily lost any original manner which his recital might have imparted to them); he accepted a proposal from the publisher to edit the book, and *has* edited it to the best of his ability, altering its form throughout, and making such other alterations as he conceived would improve the narration of the facts, without any departure from the facts themselves.

He has merely to add, that there has been no *book-making* in this case. He has not swelled the quantity of matter, but materially abridged it. The account of Grimaldi's first courtship may appear lengthy in its present form; but it has undergone a double and most comprehensive process of abridgment. The old man was garrulous upon a subject on which the youth had felt so keenly; and as the feeling did him honour in both stages of life, the Editor has not had the heart to reduce it further.

Here is the book, then, at last. After so much pains from so many hands—including the good right hand of George Cruikshank, which has seldom been better exercised,—he humbly hopes it may find favour with the public.

Doughty Street, *February*, 1838.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

[Three Letters to the *Daily News*, MARCH 9, 13, and 16, 1846]

I

I WILL take for the subject of this letter, the effect of Capital Punishment on the commission of crime, or rather of murder; the only crime with one exception (and that a rare one) to which it is now applied. Its effect in preventing crime, I will reserve for another letter: and a few of the more striking illustrations of each aspect of the subject, for a concluding one.

THE EFFECT OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ON THE COMMISSION OF MURDER

Some murders are committed in hot blood and furious rage; some, in deliberate revenge; some, in terrible despair; some (but not many) for mere gain; some, for the removal of an object dangerous to the murderer's peace or good name; some, to win a monstrous notoriety.

On murders committed in rage, in the despair of strong affection (as when a starving child is murdered by its parent) or for gain, I believe the punishment of death to have no effect in the least. In the first two cases, the impulse is a blind and wild one, infinitely beyond the reach of any reference to the punishment. In the last, there is little calculation beyond the absorbing greed of the money to be got. Courvoisier, for example, might have robbed his master with greater safety and with fewer chances of detection, if he had not murdered him. But his calculations going to the gain, and not to the loss, he had no balance for the consequences of what he did. So, it would have been more safe and prudent in the woman who was hanged a few weeks since, for the murder in Westminster, to have simply robbed her old companion in an unguarded moment, as in her sleep. But, her calculation going to the gain of what she took to be a Bank note; and the poor old woman living between her and the gain; she murdered her.

On murders committed in deliberate revenge, or to remove a stumbling block in the murderer's path, or in an insatiate craving for notoriety, is there reason to suppose that the punishment of death has the direct effect of an incentive and an impulse ?

A murder is committed in deliberate revenge. The murderer is at no trouble to prepare his train of circumstances, takes little or no pains to escape, is quite cool and collected, perfectly content to deliver himself up to the Police, makes no secret of his guilt, but boldly says, "I killed him. I'm glad of it. I meant to do it. I am ready to die." There was such a case the other day. There was such another case not long ago. There are such cases frequently. It is the commonest first exclamation on being seized. Now, what is this but a false arguing of the question, announcing a foregone conclusion, expressly leading to the crime, and inseparably arising out of the Punishment of Death? "I took his life. I give up mine to pay for it. Life for life; blood for blood. I have done the crime. I am ready with the atonement. I know all about it; it's a fair bargain between me and the law. Here am I to execute my part of it; and what is more to be said or done?" It is the very essence of the maintenance of this punishment for murder, that it *does* set life against life. It is in the essence of a stupid, weak, or otherwise ill-regulated mind (of such a murderer's mind, in short), to recognise in this set off, a something that diminishes the base and coward character of murder. "In a pitched battle, I, a common man, may kill my adversary, but he may kill me. In a duel, a gentleman may shoot his opponent through the head, but the opponent may shoot him too, and this makes it fair. Very well. I take this man's life for a reason I have, or choose to think I have, and the law takes mine. The law says, and the clergyman says, there must be blood for blood and life for life. Here it is. I pay the penalty."

A mind incapable or confounded in its perceptions—and you must argue with reference to such a mind, or you could not have such a murder—may not only establish on these grounds an idea of strict justice and fair reparation, but a stubborn and dogged fortitude and foresight that satisfy it hugely. Whether the fact be really so, or not, is a question I would be content to rest, alone, on the number of cases of revengeful murder in which this is well known, without dispute, to have been the prevailing demeanour of the criminal: and in which such speeches and such absurd reasoning have been constantly uppermost with him. "Blood for blood," and "life for life," and such like balanced jingles, have passed current in people's mouths, from legislators downwards, until they have been corrupted into "tit for tat," and acted on.

Next, come the murders done, to sweep out of the way a dreaded or detested object. At the bottom of this class of crimes, there is a slow, corroding, growing hate. Violent quarrels are commonly found to have taken place between the murdered person and the murderer: usually of opposite sexes. There are witnesses to old scenes of reproach and recrimination, in which they were the actors; and the murderer has been heard to say, in this or that coarse phrase, "that he wouldn't mind killing her, though he should be hanged for it"—in these cases, the commonest avowal.

It seems to me, that in this well-known scrap of evidence, there is a deeper meaning than is usually attached to it. I do not know, but it may be—I have a strong suspicion that it is—a clue to the slow growth of the crime, and its gradual development in the mind. More than this; a clue to the mental connection of the deed, with the punishment to which the doer of that deed is liable, until the two, conjoined, give birth to monstrous and mis-shapen Murder.

The idea of murder, in such a case, like that of self-destruction in the great majority of instances, is not a new one. It may have presented itself to the disturbed mind in a dim shape and afar off; but it has been there. After a quarrel, or with some strong sense upon him of irritation or discomfort arising out of the continuance of this life in his path, the man has brooded over the unformed desire to take it. "Though he should be hanged for it." With the entrance of the Punishment into his thoughts, the shadow of the fatal beam begins to attend—not on himself, but on the object of his hate. At every new temptation, it is there, stronger and blacker yet, trying to terrify him. When she defies or threatens him, the scaffold seems to be her strength and "vantage ground." Let her not be too sure of that; "though he should be hanged for it."

Thus, he begins to raise up, in the contemplation of this death by hanging, a new and violent enemy to brave. The prospect of a slow and solitary expiation would have no congeniality with his wicked thoughts, but this throttling and strangling has. There is always before him, an ugly, bloody, scarecrow phantom, that champions her, as it were, and yet shows him, in a ghastly way, the example of murder. Is she very weak, or very trustful in him, or infirm, or old? It gives a hideous courage to what would be mere slaughter otherwise; for there it is, a presence always about her, darkly menacing him with that penalty whose murky secret has a fascination for all secret and unwholesome thoughts. And when he struggles with his victim at the last, "though he should be hanged for it," it is a merciless wrestle, not with one weak life only, but with that ever-haunting, ever-beckoning shadow of the gallows, too; and with a fierce defiance to it, after their long survey of each other, to come on and do its worst.

Present this black idea of violence to a bad mind contemplating violence; hold up before a man remotely compassing the death of another person, the spectacle of his own ghastly and untimely death by man's hands; and out of the depths of his own nature you shall assuredly raise up that which lures and tempts him on. The laws which regulate those mysteries have not been studied or cared for, by the maintainers of this law; but they are paramount and will always assert their power.

Out of one hundred and sixty-seven persons under sentence of Death in England questioned at different times, in the course of years, by an English clergyman in the performance of his duty, there were only three who had not been spectators of executions.

We come, now, to the consideration of those murders which are committed, or attempted, with no other object than the attainment of an infamous notoriety. That this class of crime has its origin in the Punishment of Death, we cannot question; because (as we have already seen, and shall presently establish by another proof) great notoriety and interest attach, and are generally understood to attach, only to those criminals who are in danger of being executed.

One of the most remarkable instances of murder originating in mad self-conceit; and of the murderer's part in the repulsive drama, in which the law appears at such great disadvantage to itself and to society, being acted almost to the last with a self-complacency that would be horribly ludicrous if it were not utterly revolting; is presented in the case of Hocker.

Here is an insolent, flippant, dissolute youth: aping the man of intrigue and levity: over-dressed, over-confident, inordinately vain of his personal appearance: distinguished as to his hair, cane, snuff-box, and singing-voice: and unhappily the son of a working shoemaker. Bent on loftier flights than such a poor house-swallow as a teacher in a Sunday-school can take; and having no truth, industry, perseverance, or other dull work-a-day quality, to plume his wings withal; he casts about him, in his jaunty way, for some mode of distinguishing himself—some means of getting that head of hair into the print-shops; of having something like justice done to his singing-voice and fine intellect; of making the life and adventures of Thomas Hocker remarkable; and of getting up some excitement in connection with that slighted piece of biography. The Stage? No. Not feasible. There has always been a conspiracy against the Thomas Hockers, in that kind of effort. It has been the same with Authorship in prose and poetry. Is there nothing else? A Murder, now, would make a noise in the papers! There is the gallows to be sure; but without that, it would be nothing. Short of that, it wouldn't be fame. Well! We must all die at one time or other; and to die game, and have it in print, is just the thing for a man of spirit. They always die game at the Minor Theatres and the Saloons, and the people like it very much. Thurtell, too, died very game, and made a capital speech when he was tried. There's all about it in a book at the cigar-shop now. Come, Tom, get your name up! Let it be a dashing murder that shall keep the wood-engravers at it for the next two months. You are the boy to go through with it, and interest the town!

The miserable wretch, inflated by this lunatic conceit, arranges his whole plan for publication and effect. It is quite an epitome of his experience of the domestic melodrama or penny novel. There is the Victim Friend; the mysterious letter of the injured Female to the Victim Friend; the romantic spot for the Death-Struggle by night; the unexpected appearance of Thomas Hocker to the Policeman; the parlour of the Public House, with Thomas Hocker reading the paper to a strange gentleman; the Family Apartment, with a song by Thomas Hocker; the Inquest Room, with Thomas Hocker boldly looking on; the interior of the Marylebone Theatre, with Thomas Hocker taken into custody; the Police Office with Thomas Hocker "affable" to the spectators; the interior of Newgate, with Thomas Hocker preparing his defence; the Court, where Thomas Hocker, with his dancing-master airs, is put upon his trial, and complimented by the Judge; the Prosecution, the Defence, the Verdict, the Black Cap, the Sentence—each of them a line in any Playbill, and how bold a line in Thomas Hocker's life!

It is worthy of remark, that the nearer he approaches to the gallows—the great last scene to which the whole of these effects have been working up—the more the over-weening conceit of the poor wretch shows itself; the more he feels that he is the hero of the hour; the more audaciously and recklessly he lies, in supporting the character. In public—at the condemned sermon—he deports himself as becomes the man whose autographs are precious, whose portraits are innumerable; in memory of whom, whole fences and gates have been borne away, in splinters, from the scene of murder. He knows that the eyes of Europe are upon him; but he is not proud—only graceful. He bows, like the first gentleman in Europe, to the turnkey who brings him a glass of water; and composes his clothes and hassock as carefully as good Madame Blaize could do. In private—within the walls of the condemned cell—every word and action of his waning life, is a lie. His whole time is divided between telling lies and writing them. If he ever have another thought, it is for his genteel appearance on the scaffold; as when he begs the barber "not to cut his hair too short, or they won't know him when he comes out." His last proceeding but one is to write two romantic love letters to women who have no existence. His last proceeding of all (but less characteristic, though the only true one) is to swoon away, miserably, in the arms of the attendants, and be hanged up like a craven dog.

Is not such a history, from first to last, a most revolting and disgraceful one; and can the student of it bring himself to believe that it ever could have place in any record of facts, or that the miserable chief-actor in it could have ever had a motive for his arrogant wickedness, but for the comment and the explanation which the Punishment of Death supplies!

It is not a solitary case, nor is it a prodigy, but a mere specimen of a class. The case of Oxford, who fired at Her Majesty in the Park, will be found, on examination, to resemble it very nearly, in the essential feature. There is no proved pretence whatever for regarding him as mad; other than that he was like this malefactor, brimful of conceit and a desire to become, even at the cost of the gallows (the only cost within his reach), the talk of the town. He had less invention than Hocker, and perhaps was not so deliberately bad; but his attempt was a branch of the same tree, and it has its root in the ground where the scaffold is erected.

Oxford had his imitators. Let it never be forgotten in the consideration of this part of the subject, how they were stopped. So long as their attempts invested them with the distinction of being in danger of death at the hangman's hands, so long did they spring up. When the penalty of death was removed, and a mean and humiliating punishment substituted in its place, the race was at an end, and ceased to be.

II

We come now, to consider the effect of Capital Punishment in the prevention of crime.

Does it prevent crime in those who attend executions?

There never is (and there never was) an execution at the Old Bailey in London, but the spectators include two large classes of thieves—one class who go there as they would go to a dog-fight, or any other brutal sport, for the attraction and excitement of the spectacle; the other who make it a dry matter of business, and mix with the crowd, solely to pick pockets. Add to these, the dissolute, the drunken, the most idle, profligate, and abandoned of both sexes—some moody, ill-conditioned minds, drawn thither by a fearful interest—and some impelled by curiosity; of whom the greater part are of an age and temperament rendering the gratification of that curiosity highly dangerous to themselves and to society—and the great elements of the concourse are stated.

Nor is this assemblage peculiar to London. It is the same in country towns, allowing for the different statistics of the population. It is the same in America. I was present at an execution in Rome, for a most treacherous and wicked murder, and not only saw the same kind of assemblage there, but, wearing what is called a shooting-coat, with a great many pockets in it, felt innumerable hands busy in every one of them, close to the scaffold.

I have already mentioned that out of one hundred and sixty-seven convicts under sentence of death, questioned at different times in the performance of his duty by an English clergyman, there were only three who had not been spectators of executions. Mr. Wakefield, in his *Facts relating to the Punishment of Death*, goes into the working, as it were, of this sum. His testimony is extremely valuable, because it is the evidence of an educated and observing man, who, before having personal knowledge of the subject and of Newgate, was quite satisfied that the Punishment of Death should continue, but who, when he gained that experience, exerted himself to the utmost for its abolition, even at the pain of constant public reference in his own person to his own imprisonment. "It cannot be egotism," he reasonably observes, "that prompts a man to speak of himself in connection with Newgate."

"Whoever will undergo the pain," says Mr. Wakefield, "of witnessing the public destruction of a fellow-creature's life, in London, must be perfectly satisfied that in the great mass of spectators, the effect of the punishment is to excite sympathy for the criminal and hatred of the law. . . . I am inclined to believe that the criminals of London, spoken of as a class and allowing for exceptions, take the same sort of delight in witnessing executions, as the sportsman and soldier find in the dangers of hunting and war. . . . I am confident that few Old Bailey sessions pass without the trial of a boy, whose first thought of crime occurred whilst he was witnessing an execution. . . . And one grown man, of great mental powers and superior education who was acquitted of a charge of forgery, assured me that the first idea of committing a forgery occurred to him at the moment when he was accidentally witnessing the execution of Fauntleroy. To which it may be added, that Fauntleroy is said to have made precisely the same declaration in reference to the origin of his own criminality.

But one convict "who was within an ace of being hanged," among the many with whom Mr. Wakefield conversed, seems to me to have unconsciously put a question which the advocates of Capital Punishment would find it very difficult indeed to answer. "Have you often seen an execution?" asked Mr. Wakefield. "Yes, often." "Did it not frighten you?" "No. *Why should it?*"

It is very easy and very natural to turn from this ruffian, shocked by the hardened retort; but answer his question, why should it? Should he be frightened by the sight of a dead man? We are born to die, he says, with a careless triumph. We are not born to the treadmill, or to servitude and slavery, or to banishment; but the executioner has done no more for that criminal than nature may do to-morrow for the judge, and will certainly do, in her own good time, for judge and jury, counsel and witnesses, turnkeys, hangman, and all. Should he be frightened by the manner of the death? It is horrible, truly, so horrible, that the law, afraid or ashamed of its own deed, hides the face of the struggling wretch it slays; but does this fact naturally awaken in such a man, terror—or defiance? Let the same man speak. "What did you think then?" asked Mr. Wakefield. "Think? Why, I thought it was a—shame."

Disgust and indignation, or recklessness and indifference, or a morbid tendency to brood over the sight until temptation is engendered by it, are the inevitable consequences of the spectacle, according to the difference of habit and disposition in those who behold it. Why should it frighten or deter? We know it does not. We know it from the police reports, and from the testimony of those who have experience of prisons and prisoners, and we may know it, on the occasion of an execution, by the evidence of our own senses; if we will be at the misery of using them for such a purpose. But why should it? Who would send his child or his apprentice, or what tutor would send his scholars, or what master would send his servants, to be deterred from vice by the spectacle of an execution? If it be an example to criminals, and to criminals only, why are not the prisoners in Newgate brought out to see the show before the debtors' door? Why, while they are made parties to the condemned sermon, are they rigidly excluded from the improving postscript of the gallows? Because an execution is well known to be an utterly useless, barbarous, and brutalising sight, and because the sympathy of all beholders, who have any sympathy at all, is certain to be always with the criminal, and never with the law.

I learn from the newspaper accounts of every execution, how Mr.

So-and-so, and Mr. Somebody else, and Mr. So-forth shook hands with the culprit, but I never find them shaking hands with the hangman. All kinds of attention and consideration are lavished on the one; but the other is universally avoided, like a pestilence. I want to know why so much sympathy is expended on the man who kills another in the vehemence of his own bad passions, and why the man who kills him in the name of the law is shunned and fled from? Is it because the murderer is going to die? Then by no means put him to death. Is it because the hangman executes a law, which, when they once come near it face to face, all men instinctively revolt from? Then by all means change it. There is, there can be, no prevention in such a law.

It may be urged that Public Executions are not intended for the benefit of those dregs of society who habitually attend them. This is an absurdity, to which the obvious answer is, So much the worse. If they be not considered with reference to that class of persons, comprehending a great host of criminals in various stages of development they ought to be, and must be. To lose sight of that consideration is to be irrational, unjust, and cruel. All other punishments are especially devised, with a reference to the rooted habits, propensities, and antipathies of criminals. And shall it be said, out of Bedlam, that this last punishment of all, is alone to be made an exception from the rule, even where it is shown to be a means of propagating vice and crime?

But there may be people who do not attend executions, to whom the general fame and rumour of such scenes is an example, and a means of deterring from crime.

Who are they? We have seen, that around Capital Punishment there lingers a fascination, urging weak and bad people towards it, and imparting an interest to details connected with it, and with malefactors awaiting it or suffering it, which even good and well-disposed people cannot withstand. We know that last dying speeches and Newgate calendars, are the favourite literature of very low intellects. The gallows is not appealed to, as an example in the instruction of youth (unless they are training for it); nor are there condensed accounts of celebrated executions for the use of national schools. There is a story in an old spelling-book, of a certain Don't Care, who was hanged at last, but it is not understood to have had any remarkable effect on crimes or executions in the generation to which it belonged, and with which it has passed away. Hogarth's idle apprentice is hanged; but the whole scene—with the unmistakeable stout lady, drunk and pious, in the cast; the quarrelling, blasphemy, lewdness, and uproar; Tiddy Doll vending his ginger-bread, and the boys picking his pocket—is a bitter satire on the great example; as efficient then, as now.

Is it efficient to prevent crime? The parliamentary returns demonstrate that it is not. I was engaged in making some extracts from these documents, when I found them so well abstracted in one of the papers published by the committee on this subject established at

Aylesbury last year, by the humane exertions of Lord Nugent, that I am glad to quote the general results from its pages:

"In 1843, a return was laid on the table of the House of the commitments and executions for murder in England and Wales, during the thirty years ending with December 1842; divided into five periods of six years each. It shows that in the last six years, from 1836 to 1842, during which there were only 50 executions, the commitments for murder were fewer by 61 than in the six years preceding with 74 executions; fewer by 63 than in the six years ending 1830 with 75 executions; fewer by 56 than in the six years ending 1824 with 94 executions; and fewer by 93 than in the six years ending 1818, when there was no less a number of executions than 122. But it may be said, perhaps, that, in the inference we draw from this return, we are substituting cause for effect, and that, in each successive cycle, the number of murders decreased in consequence of the example of public executions in the cycle immediately preceding, and that it was for that reason there were fewer commitments. This might be said with some colour of truth, if the example had been taken from *two* successive cycles *only*. But when the comparative examples adduced are of no less than *five* successive cycles, and the result gradually and constantly progressive in the same direction, the relation of facts to each other is determined beyond all ground for dispute, namely, that the number of these crimes has diminished in consequence of the diminution of the number of executions. More especially when it is also remembered that it was *immediately after* the first of these cycles of five years, when there had been the greatest number of executions and the greatest number of murders, that the greatest number of persons were suddenly cast loose upon the country, without employ, by the reduction of the Army and Navy; that then came periods of great distress and great disturbance in the agricultural and manufacturing districts; and *above all*, that it was during the subsequent cycles that the most important mitigations were effected in the law, and that the Punishment of Death was taken away not only for crimes of stealth, such as cattle and horse stealing, and forgery, of which crimes corresponding statistics show likewise a corresponding decrease, but for the crimes of violence too, *tending to murder*, such as are many of the incendiary offences, and such as are highway robbery and burglary. But another return, laid before the House at the same time, bears upon our argument, if possible, still more conclusively. In table 11, we have *only* the years which have occurred since 1810, in which *all* persons convicted of murder suffered death; and, compared with these an *equal* number of years in which the *smallest* proportion of persons convicted were executed. In the first case there were 66 persons convicted, *all* of whom underwent the penalty of death; in the second 83 were convicted, of whom 31 only were executed. Now see how these two very different methods of dealing with the crime of murder affected the commission of it *in the years immediately following*. The number of commitments for murder, in the four years immediately following those in which all persons convicted were executed, was 270.

'In the four years immediately following those in which little more than one third of the persons convicted were executed, there were but 222, being 48 less. If we compare the commitments in the following years with those in the first years, we shall find that immediately after the examples of unsparing execution, the crime *increased nearly* 13 *per cent.*, and that after commutation was the practice and capital punishment the exception, it *decreased* 17 *per cent.*

"In the same parliamentary return is an account of the commitments and executions in London and Middlesex, *spread over a space of thirty-two years*, ending in 1842, divided into two cycles of sixteen years each. In the first of these, 34 persons were *convicted* of murder, *all of whom were executed*. In the second, 27 were *convicted*, and only 17 executed. The *commitments* for murder during the latter long period, with 17 executions, were *more than one half* fewer than they had been in the former *long* period with *exactly double the number of executions*. This appears to us to be as conclusive upon our argument as any statistical illustration can be upon any argument professing to place successive events in the relation of cause and effect to each other. How justly then is it said in that able and useful periodical work, now in the course of publication at Glasgow, under the name of the *Magazine of Popular Information on Capital and Secondary Punishment*; 'the greater the number of executions, the greater the number of murders; the smaller the number of executions, the smaller the number of murders. The lives of her Majesty's subjects are less safe with a hundred executions a year than with fifty; less safe with fifty than with twenty-five.' "

Similar results have followed from rendering public executions more and more infrequent, in Tuscany, in Prussia, in France, in Belgium. Wherever capital punishments are diminished in their number, there, crimes diminish in their number too.

But the very same advocates of the Punishment of Death who contend, in the teeth of all facts and figures, that it does prevent crime, contend in the same breath against its abolition because it does not! "There are so many bad murders," say they, "and they follow in such quick succession, that the Punishment must not be repealed." Why, is not this a reason, among others, *for* repealing it? Does it not go to show that it is ineffective as an example; that it fails to prevent crime; and that it is wholly inefficient to stay that imitation, or contagion, call it what you please, which brings one murder on the heels of another?

One forgery came crowding on another's heels in the same way, when the same punishment attached to that crime. Since it has been removed, forgeries have diminished in a most remarkable degree. Yet within five-and-thirty years, Lord Eldon, with tearful solemnity, imagined in the House of Lords as a possibility for their Lordships to shudder at, that the time might come when some visionary and morbid person might even propose the abolition of the punishment of Death for forgery. And when it *was* proposed, Lords Lyndhurst, Wynford, Tenterden,[1] and Eldon—all Law Lords—opposed it.

The same Lord Tenterden[1] manfully said, on another occasion and another question, that he was glad the subject of the amendment of the laws had been taken up by Mr. Peel, "who had not been bred to the law; for those who were, were rendered dull, by habit, to many of its defects!" I would respectfully submit in extension of this text, that a criminal judge is an excellent witness against the Punishment of Death, but a bad witness in its favour; and I will reserve this point for a few remarks in the next, concluding, Letter.

III

The last English Judge, I believe, who gave expression to a public and judicial opinion in favour of the Punishment of Death, is Mr. Justice Coleridge, who, in charging the Grand Jury at Hertford last year, took occasion to lament the presence of serious crimes in the calendar, and to say that he feared that they were referable to the comparative infrequency of Capital Punishment.

It is not incompatible with the utmost deference and respect for an authority so eminent, to say that, in this Mr. Justice Coleridge was not supported by facts, but quite the reverse. He went out of his way to found a general assumption on certain very limited and partial grounds, and even on those grounds was wrong. For among the few crimes which he instanced, murder stood prominently forth. Now persons found guilty of murder are more certainly and unsparingly hanged at this time, as the Parliamentary Returns demonstrate, than such criminals ever were. So how can the decline of public executions affect that class of crimes? As to persons committing murder, and yet not found guilty of it by juries, they escape solely because there *are* many public executions—not because there are none or few.

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[1] Printed "Tenderden" in the *Daily News*, in error.

But when I submit that a criminal judge is an excellent witness against Capital Punishment, but a bad witness in its favour, I do so on more broad and general grounds than apply to this error in fact and deduction (so I presume to consider it) on the part of the distinguished judge in question. And they are grounds which do not apply offensively to judges, as a class; than whom there are no authorities in England so deserving of general respect and confidence, or so possessed of it; but which apply alike to all men in their several degrees and pursuits.

It is certain that men contract a general liking for those things which they have studied at great cost of time and intellect, and their proficiency in which has led to their becoming distinguished and successful. It is certain that out of this feeling arises, not only that passive blindness to their defects of which the example given by my Lord Tenterden was quoted in the last letter, but an active disposition to advocate and defend them. If it were otherwise; if it were not for this spirit of interest and partisanship; no single pursuit could have that attraction for its votaries which most pursuits in course of time establish. Thus legal authorities are usually jealous of innovations on legal principles. Thus it is described of the lawyer in the Introductory Discourse to the Description of Utopia, that he said of a proposal against Capital Punishment, "'this could never be so established in England but that it must needs bring the weal-public into great jeopardy and hazard,' and as he was thus saying, he shaked his head, and made a wry mouth, and so he held his peace." Thus the Recorder of London, in 1811, objected to "the capital part being taken off" from the offence of picking pockets. Thus the Lord Chancellor, in 1813, objected to the removal of the penalty of death from the offence of stealing to the amount of five shillings from a shop. Thus, Lord Ellenborough, in 1820, anticipated the worst effects from there being no punishment of death for stealing five shillings' worth of wet linen from a bleaching ground. Thus the Solicitor General, in 1830, advocated the punishment of death for forgery, and "the satisfaction of thinking" in the teeth of mountains of evidence from bankers and other injured parties (one thousand bankers alone!) "that he was deterring persons from the commission of crime, by the severity of the law." Thus, Mr. Justice Coleridge delivered his charge at Hertford in 1845. Thus there were in the criminal code of England, in 1790, one hundred and sixty crimes punishable with death. Thus the lawyer has said, again and again, in his generation, that any change in such a state of things "must needs bring the weal-public into jeopardy and hazard." And thus he has, all through the dismal history, "shaked his head, and made a wry mouth, and held his peace." Except—a glorious exception!—when such lawyers as Bacon, More, Blackstone, Romilly, and—let us ever gratefully remember—in later times Mr. Basil Montagu, have striven, each in his day, within the utmost limits of the endurance of the mistaken feeling of the people or the legislature of the time, to champion and maintain the truth.

There is another and a stronger reason still, why a criminal judge is a bad witness in favour of the Punishment of Death. He is a chief actor in the terrible drama of a trial, where the life or death of a fellow creature is at issue. No one who has seen such a trial can fail to know, or can ever forget, its intense interest. I care not how painful this interest is, to the good, wise judge upon the bench. I admit its painful nature, and the judge's goodness and wisdom to the fullest extent—but I submit that his prominent share in the excitement of such a trial, and the dread mystery involved, has a tendency to bewilder and confuse the judge upon the general subject of that penalty. I know the solemn pause before the verdict, the hush and stilling of the fever in the court, the solitary figure brought back to the bar, and standing there, observed of all the outstretched heads and gleaming eyes, to be, next minute, stricken dead, as one may say, among them. I know the thrill that goes round when the black cap is put on, and how there will be shrieks among the women, and a taking out of some one in a swoon; and, when the judge's faltering voice delivers sentence, how awfully the prisoner and he confront each other; two mere men, destined one day, however far removed from one another at this time, to stand alike as suppliants at the bar of God. I know all this; I can imagine what the office of the judge costs, in this execution of it; but I say that in these strong sensations he is lost, and is unable to abstract the penalty as a preventive or example, from an experience of it, and from associations surrounding it, which are and can be, only his, and his alone.

Not to contend that there is no amount of wig or ermine that can change the nature of the man inside; not to say that the nature of a judge may be, like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in, and may become too used to this punishment of death, to consider it quite dispassionately; not to say that it may possibly be inconsistent to have, deciding as calm authorities in favour of death, judges who have been constantly sentencing to death;—I contend that for the reasons I have stated, alone, a judge, and especially a criminal judge, is a bad witness for the punishment but an excellent witness against it, inasmuch as in the latter case his conviction of its inutility has been so strong and paramount as utterly to beat down and conquer these adverse incidents. I have no scruple in stating this position, because, for anything I know, the majority of excellent judges now on the bench may have overcome them, and may be opposed to the Punishment of Death under any circumstances.

I mentioned that I would devote a portion of this letter to a few prominent illustrations of each head of objection to the Punishment of Death. Those on record are so very numerous that selection is extremely difficult; but in reference to the possibility of mistake, and the impossibility of reparation, one case is as good (I should rather say as bad) as a hundred; and if there were none but Eliza Fenning's, that would be sufficient. Nay, if there were none at all, it would be enough to sustain this objection, that men of finite and limited judgment do inflict, on testimony which admits of doubt, an infinite and irreparable punishment. But there are on record numerous instances of mistake; many of them very generally known and immediately recognisable in the following summary, which I copy from the New York Report already referred to.

"There have been cases in which groans have been heard in the apartment of the crime, which have attracted the steps of those on whose testimony the case has turned—when, on proceeding to the spot, they have found a man bending over the murdered body, a lantern in the left hand, and the knife yet dripping with the warm current in the blood-stained right, with horror-stricken countenance, and lips which, in the presence of the dead, seem to refuse to deny the crime in the very act of which he is thus surprised—and yet the man has been, many years after, when his memory alone could be benefited by the discovery, ascertained *not* to have been the real murderer![1] There have been cases in which, in a house in which were two persons alone, a murder has been committed on one of them—when many additional circumstances have fastened the imputation upon the other—and when, all apparent modes of access from without, being closed inward, the demonstration has seemed complete of the guilt for which that other has suffered the doom of the law—yet suffered *innocently*! There have been cases in which a father has been found murdered in an outhouse, the only person at home being a son, sworn by a sister to have been dissolute and undutiful, and anxious for the death of the father, and succession to the family property—when the track of his shoes in the snow is found from the house to the spot of the murder, and the hammer with which it was committed (known as his own), found, on a search, in the corner of one of his private drawers, with the bloody evidence of the deed only imperfectly effaced from it—and yet the son has been innocent!—the sister, years after, on her death-bed, confessing herself the fratricide as well as the parricide. There have been cases in which men have been hung on the most positive testimony to identity (aided by many suspicious circumstances), by persons familiar with their appearance, which have afterwards proved grievous mistakes, growing out of remarkable personal resemblance. There have been cases in which two men have been seen fighting in a field—an old enmity existing between them—the one found dead, killed by a stab from a pitch-fork, known as belonging to the other, and which that other had been carrying, the pitch-fork lying by the side of the murdered man—and yet its owner has been afterwards found not to have been the author of the murder of which it had been the instrument, the true murderer sitting on the jury that tried him. There have been cases in which an innkeeper has been charged by one of his servants with the murder of a traveller, the servant deposing to having seen his master on the stranger's bed, strangling him, and afterwards rifling his pockets—another servant deposing that she saw him come down at that time at a very early hour in the morning, steal into the garden, take gold from his pocket, and carefully wrapping it up bury it in a designated spot—on the search of which the ground is found loose and freshly dug, and a sum of thirty pounds in gold found buried according to the description—the master, who confessed the burying of the money, with many evidences of guilt in his hesitation and confusion, has been hung of course, and proved innocent only too late. There have been cases in which a traveller has been robbed on the highway, of twenty guineas which he had taken the precaution to *mark*—one of these is found to have been paid away or changed by one of the servants of the inn which the traveller reaches the same evening—the servant is about the height of the robber, who had been cloaked and disguised—his master deposes to his having been recently unaccountably extravagant and flush of gold—and on his trunk being searched the other nineteen marked guineas and the traveller's purse are found there, the servant being asleep at the time, half-drunk—he is of course convicted and hung, for the crime of which his master was the author! There have been cases in which a father and daughter have been overheard in violent dispute—the words "*barbarity*," "*cruelty*," and "*death*" being heard frequently to proceed from the latter—the former goes out, locking the door behind him—groans are overheard, and the words, "*cruel father, thou art the cause of my death!*"—on the room being opened, she is found on the point of death from a wound in her side, and near her the knife with which it had been inflicted—and on being questioned as to her owing her death to her father, her last motion, before expiring, is an expression of assent—the father, on returning to the room exhibits the usual evidences of guilt—he, too, is of course hung—and it is not till nearly a year afterwards that, on the discovery of conclusive evidence that it was a suicide, the vain reparation is made to his memory by the public authorities, of—waving a pair of colours over his grave in token of the recognition of his innocence.'

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[1] Printed "murdered" in the *Daily News*.

More than a hundred such cases are known, it is said in this Report, in English criminal jurisprudence. The same Report contains three striking cases of supposed criminals being unjustly hanged in America; and also five more in which people whose innocence was not afterwards established were put to death on evidence as purely cricumstantial and as doubtful, to say the least of it, as any that was held to be sufficient in this general summary of legal murders. Mr. O'Connell defended, in Ireland, within five-and-twenty years, three brothers who were hanged for a murder of which they were afterwards shown to have been innocent. I cannot find the reference at this moment, but I have seen it stated on good authority, that but for the exertions, I think of the present Lord Chief Baron, six or seven innocent men would certainly have been hanged. Such are the instances of wrong judgment which are known to us. How many more there may be, in which the real murderers never disclosed their guilt, or were never discovered, and where the odium of great crimes still rests on guiltless people long since resolved to dust in their untimely graves, no human power can tell.

The effect of public executions on those who witness them, requires no better illustration, and can have none, than the scene which any execution in itself presents, and the general Police-office knowledge of the offences arising out of them. I have stated my belief that the study of rude scenes leads to the disregard of human life, and to murder. Referring since that expression of opinion to the very last trial for murder in London, I have made inquiry, and am assured that the youth now under sentence of death in Newgate for the murder of his master in Drury Lane, was a vigilant spectator of the three last public executions in this City. What effects a daily increasing familiarity with the scaffold, and with death upon it, wrought in France in the Great Revolution, everybody knows. In reference to this very question of Capital Punishment, Robespierre himself, before he was

"in blood stept in so far,"

warned the National Assembly that in taking human life, and in displaying before the eyes of the people scenes of cruelty and the bodies of murdered men, the law awakened ferocious prejudices, which gave birth to a long and growing train of their own kind. With how much reason this was said, let his own detestable name bear witness! If we would know how callous and hardened society, even in a peaceful and settled state, becomes to public executions when they are frequent, let us recollect how few they were who made the last attempt to stay the dreadful Monday-morning spectacles of men and women strung up in a row for crimes as different in their degree as our whole social scheme is different in its component parts, which, within some fifteen years or so, made human shambles of the Old Bailey.

There is no better way of testing the effect of public executions on those who do not actually behold them, but who read of them and know of them, than by inquiring into their efficiency in preventing crime. In this respect they have always, and in all countries, failed. According to all facts and figures, failed. In Russia, in Spain, in France, in Italy, in Belgium, in Sweden, in England, there has been one result. In Bombay, during the Recordership of Sir James Macintosh, there were fewer crimes in seven years without one execution, than in the preceding seven years with forty-seven executions; notwithstanding that in the seven years without capital punishment, the population had greatly increased, and there had been a large accession to the numbers of the ignorant and licentious soldiery, with whom the more violent offences originated. During the four wickedest years of the Bank of England (from 1814 to 1817, inclusive), when the one-pound note capital prosecutions were most numerous and shocking, the number of forged one-pound notes discovered by the Bank steadily increased, from the gross amount in the first year of £10,342, to the gross amount in the last of £28,412. But in every branch of this part of the subject—the inefficiency of capital punishment to prevent crime, and its efficiency to produce it—the body of evidence (if there were space to quote or analyse it here) is overpowering and resistless.

I have purposely deferred until now any reference to one objection which is urged against the abolition of capital punishment: I mean that objection which claims to rest on Spiritual authority.

It was excellently well said by Lord Melbourne, that no class of persons can be shown to be very miserable and oppressed, but some supporters of things as they are will immediately rise up and assert—not that those persons are moderately well to do, or that their lot in life has a reasonably bright side—but that they are, of all sorts and conditions of men, the happiest. In like manner, when a certain proceeding or institution is shown to be very wrong indeed, there is a class of people who rush to the fountain-head at once, and will have no less an authority for it than the Bible, on any terms.

So, we have the Bible appealed to in behalf of Capital Punishment. So, we have the Bible produced as a distinct authority for Slavery. So, American representatives find the title of their country to the Oregon territory distinctly laid down in the Book of Genesis. So, in course of time, we shall find Repudiation, perhaps, expressly commanded in the Sacred Writings.

It is enough for me to be satisfied, on calm inquiry and with reason, that an Institution or Custom is wrong and bad; and thence to feel assured that IT CANNOT BE a part of the law laid down by the Divinity who walked the earth. Though every other man who wields a pen should turn himself into a commentator on the Scriptures—not all their united efforts, pursued through our united lives, could ever persuade me that Slavery is a Christian law; nor, with one of these objections to an execution in my certain knowledge, that Executions are a Christian law, my will is not concerned. I could not, in my veneration for the life and lessons of Our Lord, believe it. If any text appeared to justify the claim, I would reject that limited appeal, and rest upon the character of the Redeemer, and the great scheme of His Religion, where, in its broad spirit, made so plain—and not this or that disputed letter—we all put our trust. But, happily, such doubts do not exist. The case is far too plain. The Rev. Henry Christmas, in a recent pamphlet on this subject, shows clearly that in five important versions of the Old Testament (to say nothing of versions of less note) the words, "by man," in the often-quoted text, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," do not appear at all. We know that the law of Moses was delivered to certain wandering tribes, in a peculiar and perfectly different social condition from that which prevails among us at this time. We know that the Christian Dispensation did distinctly repeal and annul certain portions of that law. We know that the doctrine of retributive justice or vengeance, was plainly disavowed by the Saviour. We know that on the only occasion of an offender, liable by the law to death, being brought before Him for His judgment, it was *not* death. We know that He said, "Thou shalt not kill." And if we are still to inflict capital punishment because of the Mosaic law (under which it was not the consequence of a legal proceeding, but an act of vengeance from the next of kin, which would surely be discouraged by our later laws if it were revived among the Jews just now), it would be equally reasonable to establish the lawfulness of a plurality of wives on the same authority.

Here I will leave this aspect of the question. I should not have treated of it at all, in the columns of a newspaper, but for the possibility of being unjustly supposed to have given it no consideration in my own mind.

In bringing to a close these letters on a subject, in connection with which there is happily very little that is new to be said or written, I beg to be understood as advocating the total abolition of the Punishment of Death, as a general principle, for the advantage of society, for the prevention of crime, and without the least reference to, or tenderness for any individual malefactor whomsoever. Indeed, in most cases of murder, my feeling towards the culprit is very strongly and violently the reverse. I am the more desirous to be so understood, after reading a speech made by Mr. Macaulay in the House of Commons last Tuesday night, in which that accomplished gentleman hardly seemed to recognise the possibility of anybody entertaining an honest conviction of the inutility and bad effects of Capital Punishment in the abstract, found on inquiry and reflection, without being the victim of "a kind of effeminate feeling." Without staying to inquire what there may be that is especially manly and heroic in the advocacy of the gallows, or to express my admiration of Mr. Calcraft, the hangman, as doubtless one of the most manly specimens now in existence, I would simply hint a doubt, in all good humour, whether this be the true Macaulay way of meeting a great question? One of the instances of effeminacy of feeling quoted by Mr. Macaulay, I have reason to think was not quite fairly stated. I allude to the petition in Tawell's case. I had neither hand nor part in it myself; but, unless I am greatly mistaken, it did pretty clearly set forth that Tawell was a most abhorred villain, and that the House might conclude how strongly the petitioners were opposed to the Punishment of Death, when they prayed for its non-infliction even in such a case.

IN MEMORIAM: W. M. THACKERAY

[*The Cornhill Magazine*, FEBRUARY 1864]

IT has been desired by some of the personal friends of the great English writer who established this magazine, that its brief record of his having been stricken from among men should be written by the old comrade and brother in arms who pens these lines, and of whom he often wrote himself, and always with the warmest generosity.

I saw him first, nearly twenty-eight years ago, when he proposed to become the illustrator of my earliest book. I saw him last, shortly before Christmas, at the Athenæum Club, when he told me that he had been in bed three days—that, after these attacks, he was troubled with cold shiverings, "which quite took the power of work out of him"—and that he had it in his mind to try a new remedy which he laughingly described. He was very cheerful, and looked very bright. In the night of that day week, he died.

The long interval between those two periods is marked in my remembrance of him by many occasions when he was supremely humorous, when he was irresistibly extravagant, when he was softened and serious, when he was charming with children. But, by none do I recall him more tenderly than by two or three that start out of the crowd, when he unexpectedly presented himself in my room, announcing how that some passage in a certain book had made him cry yesterday, and how that he had come to dinner, "because he couldn't help it," and must talk such passage over. No one can ever have seen him more genial, natural, cordial, fresh, and honestly impulsive, than I have seen him at those times. No one can be surer than I, of the greatness and the goodness of the heart that then disclosed itself.

We had our differences of opinion. I thought that he too much feigned a want of earnestness, and that he made a pretence of undervaluing his art, which was not good for the art that he held in trust. But, when we fell upon these topics, it was never very gravely, and I have a lively image of him in my mind, twisting both his hands in his hair, and stamping about, laughing, to make an end of the discussion.

When we were associated in remembrance of the late Mr. Douglas Jerrold, he delivered a public lecture in London, in the course of which, he read his very best contribution to *Punch*, describing the grown-up cares of a poor family of young children. No one hearing him could have doubted his natural gentleness, or his thoroughly unaffected manly sympathy with the weak and lowly. He read the paper most pathetically, and with a simplicity of tenderness that certainly moved one of his audience to tears. This was presently after his standing for Oxford, from which place he had dispatched his agent to me, with a droll note (to which he afterwards added a verbal postscript), urging me to "come down and make a speech, and tell them who he was, for he doubted whether more than two of the electors had ever heard of him, and he thought there might be as many as six or eight who had heard of me." He introduced the lecture just mentioned, with a reference to his late electioneering failure, which was full of good sense, good spirits, and good humour.

He had a particular delight in boys, and an excellent way with them. I remember his once asking me with fantastic gravity, when he had been to Eton where my eldest son then was, whether I felt as he did in regard of never seeing a boy without wanting instantly to give him a sovereign? I thought of this when I looked down into his grave, after he was laid there, for I looked down into it over the shoulder of a boy to whom he had been kind.

These are slight remembrances; but it is to little familiar things suggestive of the voice, look, manner, never, never more to be encountered on this earth, that the mind first turns in a bereavement. And greater things that are known of him, in the way of his warm affections, his quiet endurance, his unselfish thoughtfulness for others, and his munificent hand, may not be told.

If, in the reckless vivacity of his youth, his satirical pen had ever gone astray or done amiss, he had caused it to prefer its own petition for forgiveness, long before:

I've writ the foolish fancy of his brain;
The aimless jest that, striking, hath caused pain;
The idle word that he'd wish back again.

In no pages should I take it upon myself at this time to discourse of his books, of his refined knowledge of character, of his subtle acquaintance with the weaknesses of human nature, of his delightful playfulness as an essayist, of his quaint and touching ballads, of his mastery over the English language. Least of all, in these pages, enriched by his brilliant qualities from the first of the series, and beforehand accepted by the Public through the strength of his great name.

But, on the table before me, there lies all that he had written of his latest and last story. That it would be very sad to any one—that it is inexpressibly so to a writer—in its evidences of matured designs never to be accomplished, of intentions begun to be executed and destined never to be completed, of careful preparation for long roads of thought that he was never to traverse, and for shining goals that he was never to reach, will be readily believed. The pain, however, that I have felt in perusing it, has not been deeper than the conviction that he was in the healthiest vigour of his powers when he wrought on this last labour. In respect of earnest feeling, far-seeing purpose, character, incident, and a certain loving picturesqueness blending the whole, I believe it to be much the best of all his works. That he fully meant it to be so, that he had become strongly attached to it, and that he bestowed great pains upon it, I trace in almost every page. It contains one picture which must have cost him extreme distress, and which is a masterpiece. There are two children in it, touched with a hand as loving and tender as ever a father caressed his little child with. There is some young love, as pure and innocent and pretty as the truth. And it is very remarkable that, by reason of the singular construction of the story, more than one main incident usually belonging to the end of such a fiction is anticipated in the beginning, and thus there is an approach to completeness in the fragment, as to the satisfaction of the reader's mind concerning the most interesting persons, which could hardly have been better attained if the writer's breaking-off had been foreseen.

The last line he wrote, and the last proof he corrected, are among these papers through which I have so sorrowfully made my way. The condition of the little pages of manuscript where Death stopped his hand, shows that he had carried them about, and often taken them out of his pocket here and there, for patient revision and interlineation. The last words he corrected in print, were, "And my heart throbbed with an exquisite bliss." God grant that on that Christmas Eve when he laid his head back on his pillow and threw up his arms as he had been wont to do when very weary, some consciousness of duty done and Christian hope throughout life humbly cherished, may have caused his own heart so to throb, when he passed away to his Redeemer's rest!

He was found peacefully lying as above described, composed, undisturbed, and to all appearance asleep, on the twenty-fourth of December, 1863. He was only in his fifty-third year; so young a man, that the mother who blessed him in his first sleep, blessed him in his last. Twenty years before, he had written, after being in a white squall:

And when, its force expended,
The harmless storm was ended,
And, as the sunrise splendid
   Came blushing o'er the sea;
I thought, as day was breaking,
My little girls were waking,
And smiling, and making
   A prayer at home for me.

Those little girls had grown to be women when the mournful day broke that saw their father lying dead. In those twenty years of companionship with him, they had learned much from him; and one of them has a literary course before her, worthy of her famous name.

On the bright wintry day, the last but one of the old year, he was laid in his grave at Kensal Green, there to mingle the dust to which the mortal part of him had returned, with that of a third child, lost in her infancy, years ago. The heads of a great concourse of his fellow-workers in the Arts, were bowed around his tomb.

THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL WALKING-MATCH

[FEBRUARY 29, 1868]

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT entered into at Baltimore in the United States of America, this third day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight, between George Dolby (British subject), *alias* the "Man of Ross," and James Ripley Osgood (American citizen), *alias* the "Boston Bantam."

WHEREAS some bounce having arisen between the above men in reference to feats of pedestrianism and agility, they have agreed to settle their differences and prove who is the better man by means of a walking match for two hats a side and the glory of their respective countries; and whereas they agree that the said match shall come off, whatsoever the weather, on the Mill Dam Road, outside Boston, on Saturday, the 29th of the present month, and whereas they agree that the personal attendants on themselves during the whole walk, and also the umpires and starters and declarers of victory in the match shall be James T. Fields of Boston, known in sporting circles as Massachusetts Jemmy, and Charles Dickens, of "Falstaff's," Gad's Hill, whose surprising performances (without the least variation), on that truly national instrument, the American Catarrh, have won for him the well-merited title of the Gad's Hill Gasper. Now these are to be the articles of the match:—

1. The men are to be started on the day appointed by Massachusetts Jemmy and the Gasper.

2. Jemmy and the Gasper are, on some previous day, to walk out at the rate of not less than four miles an hour by the Gasper's watch for one hour and a half. At the expiration of that one hour and a half they are to carefully note the place at which they halt. On the match coming off they are to station themselves in the middle of the road at that precise point, and the men (keeping clear of them and of each other) are to turn round them, right shoulder inward, and walk back to the starting point. The man declared by them to pass the starting point first is to be the victor and the winner of the match.

3. No jostling or fouling allowed.

4. All cautions and orders issued to the men by the umpires, starters, and declarers of victory to be considered final and admitting of no appeal.

5. A sporting narrative of the match to be written by the Gasper within one week after its coming off, and the same to be duly printed (at the expense of the subscribers to these articles) on a broadside. The said broadside to be framed and glazed, and one copy of the same to be carefully preserved by each of the subscribers to these articles.

6. The men to show on the evening of the day of walking at six o'clock precisely at the Parker House, Boston, when and where a dinner will be given them by the Gasper. The Gasper to occupy the chair, faced by Massachusetts Jemmy. The latter promptly and formally to invite, as soon as may be after the date of these presents, the following guests to honour the said dinner with their presence, that is to say—

> Mistress Annie Fields, Mr. Charles Eliot Norton and Mrs. Norton, Professor James Russell Lowell and Mrs. Lowell, and Miss Lowell, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes and Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Howard Malcolm Ticknor and Mrs. Ticknor, Mr. Aldrich and Mrs. Aldrich, Mr. Schlesinger, and an obscure poet named Longfellow (if discoverable), and Miss Longfellow.

Now lastly. In token of their accepting the trusts and offices by these articles conferred upon them, these articles are solemnly and formally signed by Massachusetts Jemmy and by the Gad's Hill Gasper, as well as by the men themselves.

Signed by the *Man of Ross*, otherwise George Dolby.
Signed by the *Boston Bantam*, otherwise James R. Osgood.
Signed by *Massachusetts Jemmy*, otherwise James T. Fields.
Signed by the *Gad's Hill Gasper*, otherwise Charles Dickens.
Witness to the signatures, William S. Anthony.

THE SPORTING NARRATIVE

THE MEN

The Boston Bantam (*alias* Bright Chanticleer), is a young bird, though too old to be caught with chaff. He comes of a thorough game breed, and has a clear though modest crow. He pulls down the scale at ten stone and a half and add a pound or two. His previous performances in the pedestrian line have not been numerous. He once achieved a neat little match against time in two left boots at Philadelphia; but this must be considered as a pedestrian eccentricity, and cannot be accepted by the rigid chronicler as high art.

The old mower with the scythe and hour-glass has not yet laid his mawler heavily on the Bantam's frontispiece, but he has had a grip at the Bantam's top feathers, and in plucking out a handful was very near making him like the great Napoleon Buonaparte (with the exception of the victualling department), when the ancient one found himself too much occupied to carry out the idea, and had to give it up.

The Man of Ross (*alias* old Alick Pope, *alias* All-our-praises-why-should-lords, etc.), is a thought and a half too fleshy, and if he accidentally sat down upon his baby would do it to the tune of fourteen stone. This popular codger is of the rubicund and jovial sort, and has long been known as a piscatorial pedestrian on the banks of the Wye. But Izaak Walton hadn't pace—look at his book and you'll find it slow—and when that article comes into question, the fishing-rod may prove to some of his disciples a rod in pickle. Howbeit the Man of Ross is a lively ambler, and has a sweet stride of his own.

THE TRAINING

If vigorous attention to diet could have brought both men up to the post in tip-top feather, their condition would have left nothing to be desired. But both men might have had more daily practice in the poetry of motion. Their breathings were confined to an occasional Baltimore burst under the guidance of the Gasper, and to an amicable toddle between themselves at Washington.

THE COURSE

Six miles and a half, good measure, from the first tree in the Mill Dam Road lies the little village (with no refreshments in it but five oranges and a bottle of blacking), of Newton Centre. Here Massachusetts Jemmy and the Gasper had established the turning-point. The road comprehended every variety of inconvenience to test the mettle of the men, and nearly the whole of it was covered with snow.

THE START

was effected beautifully. The men taking their stand in exact line at the starting-post, the first tree aforesaid, received from the Gasper the warning, "Are you ready?" and then the signal, "One, two, three—go!" They got away exactly together, and at a spinning speed, waited on by Massachusetts Jemmy and the Gasper.

THE RACE

In the teeth of an intensely cold and bitter wind, before which the snow flew fast and furious across the road from right to left, the Bantam slightly led. But the Man responded to the challenge, and soon breasted him. For the first three miles each led by a yard or so alternately, but the walking was very even. On four miles being called by the Gasper, the men were side by side, and then ensued one of the best periods of the race, the same splitting pace being held by both through a heavy snow wreath and up a dragging hill. At this point it was anybody's game, a dollar on Rossius and two half-dollars on the member of the feathery tribe. When five miles were called the men were still shoulder to shoulder. At about six miles the Gasper put on a tremendous spurt to leave the men behind and establish himself at the turning-point at the entrance of the village. He afterwards declared he had received a mental knock-downer in taking his station and facing about to find Bright Chanticleer close in upon him, and Rossius steaming up like a locomotive. The Bantam rounded first; Rossius rounded wide; and from that moment the Bantam steadily shot ahead. Though both were breathed at the turn, the Bantam quickly got his bellows into obedient condition, and blew away like an orderly blacksmith in full work. The forcing pumps of Rossius likewise proved themselves tough and true, and warranted first-rate, but he fell off in pace; whereas the Bantam pegged away with his little drum-sticks as if he saw his wives and a peck of barley waiting for him at the family perch. Continually gaining upon him of Ross, Chanticleer gradually drew ahead within a few yards of half a mile, finally doing the whole distance in two hours and forty-eight minutes. Ross had ceased to compete three miles short of the winning-post, but bravely walked it out, and came in seven minutes later.

REMARKS

The difficulties under which this plucky match was walked can only be appreciated by those who were on the ground. To the excessive rigour of the icy blast and the depth and state of the snow, must be added the constant scattering of the latter into the air and into the eyes of the men, while heads of hair, beards, eyelashes, and eyebrows were frozen into icicles. To breathe at all in such a rarefied and disturbed atmosphere was not easy, but to breathe up to the required mark was genuine, slogging, ding-dong hard labour. That both competitors were game to the backbone, doing what they did under such conditions, was evident to all; but to his gameness the courageous Bantam added unexpected endurance, and (like the sailor's watch that did three hours to the cathedral clock's one) unexpected powers of going when wound up. The knowing eye could not fail to detect considerable disparity between the lads, Chanticleer being, as Mrs. Cratchit said of Tiny Tim, "very light to carry," and Rossius promising fair to attain the rotundity of the anonymous cove in the epigram—

> "And when he walks the streets the paviors cry,
> 'God bless you, sir!'—and lay their rammers by."

MISCELLANIES FROM "THE EXAMINER"

(1838–1849)

CRUIKSHANK'S "THE DRUNKARD'S CHILDREN"

A "SEQUEL TO THE BOTTLE" [1] seems to us to demand a few words by way of gentle protest. Few men have a better right to erect themselves into teachers of the people than Mr. George Cruikshank. Few men have observed the people as he has done, or know them better; few are more earnestly and honestly disposed to teach them for their good; and there are very, very few artists, in England or abroad, who can approach him in his peculiar and remarkable power.

But this teaching, to last, must be fairly conducted. It must not be all on one side. When Mr. Cruikshank shows us, and shows us so forcibly and vigorously, that side of the medal on which the people in their crimes and faults are stamped, he is bound to help us to a glance at that other side on which the government that forms the people, with all *its* faults and vices, is no less plainly impressed. Drunkenness, as a national horror, is the effect of many causes. Foul smells, disgusting habitations, bad workshops and workshop customs, want of light, air, and water, the absence of all easy means of decency and health, are commonest among its common, everyday, physical causes. The mental weariness and languor so induced, the want of wholesome relaxation, the craving for *some* stimulus and excitement, which is as much a part of such lives as the sun is; and, last and inclusive of all the rest, ignorance, and the need there is amongst the English people of reasonable, rational training, in lieu of mere parrot-education, or none at all; are its most obvious moral causes. It would be as sound philosophy to issue a series of plates under the title of The Physic Bottle, or the Saline Mixture, and, tracing the history of typhus fever by such means, to refer it all to the gin-shop, as it is to refer Drunkenness thither and to stop there. Drunkenness does not begin there. It has a teeming and reproachful history anterior to that stage; and at the remediable evil in that history, it is the duty of the moralist, if he strikes at all, to strike deep and spare not.

Hogarth avoided the Drunkard's Progress, we conceive, precisely because the causes of drunkenness among the poor were so numerous and widely spread, and lurked so sorrowfully deep and far down in all human misery, neglect, and despair, that even *his* pencil could not bring them fairly and justly into the light. That he was never contented with beginning at the effect, witness the Miser (his shoe new-soled with the binding of his Bible) dead before the Young Rake begins his career; the worldly father, listless daughter, impoverished nobleman, and crafty lawyer in the first plate of the *Mariage à la Mode*; the detestable advances in the Stages of Cruelty; and the progress downward of Thomas Idle! That he did not spare that kind of drunkenness which was of more "respectable" engenderment, his midnight modern conversation, the election plates, and a crowd of stupid aldermen and other guzzlers, amply testify. But after one immortal journey down Gin Lane, he turned away in grief and sorrow—perhaps in hope of better things one day, from better laws, and schools, and poor men's homes—and went back no more. It is remarkable of that picture, that while it exhibits drunkenness in its most appalling forms, it forces on the attention of the spectator a most neglected, wretched neighbourhood (the same that is only just now cleared away for the extension of Oxford Street) and an unwholesome, indecent, abject condition of life, worthy to be a Frontispiece to the late Report of the Sanitary Commissioners, made nearly one hundred years afterwards. We have always been inclined to think the purpose of this piece not adequately stated, even by Charles Lamb. "The very houses seem absolutely reeling," it is true; but they quite as powerfully indicate some of the more prominent causes of intoxication among the neglected orders of society, as any of its effects. There is no evidence that any of the actors in the dreary scene have ever been much better off than we find them. The best are pawning the commonest necessaries, and tools of their trades, and the worst are homeless vagrants who give us no clue to their having been otherwise in bygone days. All are living and dying miserably. Nobody is interfering for prevention or for cure in the generation going out before us, or the generation coming in. The beadle (the only sober man in the composition except the pawnbroker) is mightily indifferent to the orphan-child crying beside its parent's coffin. The little charity-girls are not so well taught or looked after, but that they can take to dram-drinking already. The church is very prominent and handsome, but coldly surveys these things, in progress underneath the shadow of its tower (it was in the year of grace eighteen hundred and forty-eight that a Bishop of London first came out respecting something wrong in poor men's social accommodations), and is passive in the picture. We take all this to have a meaning, and to the best of our knowledge it has not grown obsolete in a century.

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[1] The Drunkard's Children. A Sequel to the Bottle. In eight Plates. By George Cruikshank.

Whereas, to all such considerations Mr. Cruikshank gives the go-by. The hero of the Bottle, and father of these children, lived in undoubted comfort and good esteem until he was some five-and-thirty years of age, when, happening, unluckily, to have a goose for dinner one day, in the bosom of his thriving family, he jocularly sent out for a bottle of gin, and persuaded his wife (until then a pattern of neatness and good housewifery) to take a little drop, after the stuffing, from which moment the family never left off drinking gin, and rushed downhill to destruction, very fast.

Entertaining the highest respect for Mr. Cruikshank's great genius, and no less respect for his motives in these publications, we deem it right on the appearance of a sequel to the Bottle, to protest against this. First, because it is a compromising of a very serious and pressing truth; secondly, because it will, in time, defeat the end these pictures are designed to bring about. There is no class of society so certain to find out their weak place, as the class to which they are especially addressed. It is particularly within their knowledge and experience.

In the present series we trace the brother and sister whom we left in that terrible representation of the father's madness with which the first series closed, through the career of vice and crime then lowering before them. The gin-shop, beer-shop, and dancing-rooms receive them in turn. They are tried for a robbery. The boy is convicted, and sentenced to transportation; the girl acquitted. He dies, prematurely, on board the hulks; and she, desolate and mad, flings herself from London Bridge into the night-darkened river.

The power of this closing scene is extraordinary. It haunts the remembrance, like an awful reality. It is full of passion and terror, and we question whether any other hand could so have rendered it. Nor, although far exceeding all that has gone before, as such a catastrophe should, is it without the strongest support all through the story. The death-bed scene on board the hulks—the convict who is composing the face—and the other who is drawing the screen round the bed's head—are masterpieces, worthy of the greatest painter. The reality of the place, and the fidelity with which every minute object illustrative of it is presented, are quite surprising. But the same feature is remarkable throughout. In the trial scene at the Old Bailey the eye may wander round the court, and observe everything that is a part of the place. The very light and atmosphere of the reality are reproduced with astonishing truth. So in the gin-shop and the beer-shop; no fragment of the fact is indicated and slurred over, but every shred of it is honestly made out. It is curious, in closing the book, to recall the number of faces we have seen that have as much individual character and identity in our remembrance as if we had been looking at so many living people of flesh and blood. The man behind the bar in the gin-shop, the barristers round the table in court, the convicts already mentioned, will be, like the figures in the pictures of which the Spanish Friar spoke to Wilkie, realities, when thousands of living shadows shall have passed away. May Mr. Cruikshank linger long behind to give us many more of such realities, and to do with simple means, such as are used here, what the whole paraphernalia and resources of Art could not effect, without a master hand!

The Sequel to the Bottle is published at the same price as its predecessor. The eight large plates may be bought for a shilling!

JUDICIAL SPECIAL PLEADING

It is unnecessary for us to observe that we have not the least sympathy with physical-force chartism in the abstract, or with the tried and convicted physical-force chartists in particular. Apart from the atrocious designs to which these men, beyond all question, willingly and easily subscribed, even if it be granted that such extremes of wickedness were mainly suggested by the spies in whom their dense ignorance confided, they have done too much damage to the cause of rational liberty and freedom all over the world to be regarded in any other light than as enemies of the common weal, and the worst foes of the common people.

But, for all this, we would have the language of common-sense and knowledge addressed to these offenders—especially from the Bench. They need it very much; and besides that the truth should be spoken at all times, it is desirable that it should always appear in conjunction with the gravity and authority of the judicial ermine.

Mr. Baron Alderson, we regret to observe, opened the late special commission for the county of Chester with a kind of judicial special-constableism by no means edifying. In sporting phrase, he " went in" upon the general subject of Revolution with a determination to win; and as nothing is easier than for a man, wigged or unwigged, to say what he pleases when he has all the talk to himself and there is nobody to answer him, he improved the occasion after a somewhat startling manner. It is important that it should not be left wholly unnoticed. On Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff's magic thermometer, at his apartment in Shoe Lane, the Church was placed between zeal and moderation; and Mr. Bickerstaff observed that if the enchanted liquor rose from the central point, Church, too high in zeal, it was in danger of going up to wrath, and from wrath to persecution. The substitution of "Bench" for "Church" by the wise old censor of Great Britain, would no doubt have been attended with the same result.

Mr. Baron Alderson informed the grand jury, for their edification, that "previous to the Revolution in France, of 1790, the physical comforts possessed by the poor greatly exceeded those possessed by them subsequent to that event." Before we pass to Mr. Baron Alderson's proof in support of this allegation, we would inquire whether, at this time of day, any rational man supposes that the first Revolution in France was an event that could have been avoided, or that is difficult to be accounted for, on looking back ? Whether it was not the horrible catastrophe of a drama, which had already passed through every scene and shade of progress, inevitably leading on to that fearful conclusion ? Whether there is any record, in the world's history, of a people among whom the arts and sciences, and the refinements of civilised life existed, so oppressed, degraded, and utterly miserable, as the mass of the French population were before that Revolution? Physical comforts! No such thing was known among the French people—among *the people*—for years before the Revolution. They had died of sheer want and famine, in numbers. The hunting-trains of their kings had ridden over their bodies in the royal forests. Multitudes had gone about, crying and howling for bread, in the streets of Paris. The line of road from Versailles to the capital had been blocked up by starvation and nakedness pouring in from the departments. The tables spread by Egalité Orleans in the public streets had been besieged by the foremost stragglers of a whole nation of paupers, on the face of every one of whom the shadow of the coming guillotine was black. An infamous feudality and a corrupt government had plundered and ground them down, year after year, until they were reduced to a condition of distress which has no parallel. As their wretchedness deepened, the wantonness and luxury of their oppressors heightened, until the very fashions and customs of the upper classes ran mad from being unrestrained, and became monstrous.

"All," says Thiers, "was monopolised by a few hands, and the burdens bore upon a single class. The nobility and the clergy possessed nearly two-thirds of the landed property. The other third, belonging to the people, paid taxes to the king, a multitude of feudal dues to the nobility, the tithe to the clergy, and was, moreover, liable to the devastations of noble sportsmen and their game The taxes on consumption weighed heavily on the great mass, and consequently on the people. The mode in which they were levied was vexatious. The gentry might be in arrear with impunity; the people, on the other hand, ill-treated and imprisoned, were doomed to suffer in body, in default of goods. They defended with their blood the upper classes of society, without being able to subsist themselves."

Bad as the state of things was which succeeded to the Revolution, and must always follow any such dire convulsion, if there be anything in history that is certain, it is certain that the French people had no physical comforts when the Revolution occurred. And when Mr. Baron Alderson talks to the grand jury of that Revolution being a mere struggle for "political rights," he talks (with due submission to him) nonsense, and loses an opportunity of pointing his discourse to the instruction of the chartists. It was a struggle on the part of the people for social recognition and existence. It was a struggle for vengeance against intolerable oppressors. It was a struggle for the overthrow of a system of oppression, which in its contempt of all humanity, decency, and natural rights, and in its systematic degradation of the people, had trained them to be the demons that they showed themselves, when they rose up and cast it down for ever.

Mr. Baron Alderson's proof of his position would be a strange one, by whomsoever addressed, but is an especially strange one to be put forward by a high functionary, one of whose most important duties is the examination and sifting of evidence, with a view to its being better understood by minds unaccustomed to such investigations.

> "It had been assumed, on very competent authority, that the physical comforts of the poor might be safely judged of by the quantity of meat consumed by the population; and, taking this as the criterion, the statistics of Paris gave the following results: In 1789, during the period of the old monarchy, the quantity of meat consumed was 147 lbs. per man; in 1817, after the Bourbon dynasty had been restored to the throne, subsequent to the Revolution, it was 110 lbs. 2 ozs. per man; and in 1827, the medium period between the restoration of the Bourbons and the present time, the average was still about 110 lbs.; while, after the Revolution of 1830, it fell to 98 lbs. 11 ozs., and at this period it was in all probability still less."

The statistics *of Paris*, in 1789! When the Court, displaying extraordinary magnificence, was in Paris; when the three orders, all the great dignitaries of the State, and all their immense train of followers and dependants, were in Paris; when the aristocracy, making their last effort at accommodation with the king, were in Paris, and remained there until the close of the year; when there was the great procession to the church of Notre Dame, in Paris; when the opening of the States-General took place, in Paris; when the Commons constituted themselves the National Assembly, in Paris; when the electors, assembled from sixty districts, refused to depart from Paris; when the garden of the Palais Royal was the scene of the nightly assemblage of more foreigners, debauchees, and loungers, than had ever been seen in Paris; when people came into Paris from all parts of France; when there was all the agitation, uproar, revelling, banqueting, and delirium in Paris, which distinguished that year of great events;—when, in short, the meat-eating classes were all in Paris, and all at high feasting in the whirl and fury of such a time!

Mr. Baron Alderson takes this very year of 1789, and dividing the quantity of meat consumed by the population of Paris, sets before the grand jury the childish absurdity of there having been 147 lbs. of meat per man, as a proof of the physical comforts of the people! This year of 1789 being on record as the hardest ever known by the French people since the disasters of Louis XIV., and the immortal charity of Fénelon! This year of 1789 being the year when Mirabeau was speaking in the Assembly of "famished Paris"; when the king was forced to receive deputations of women who demanded bread; and when they rang out to all Paris, "Bread! rise up for bread!" with the great bell of the Hotel de Ville!

It would be idle to dissect such evidence more minutely. It is too gross and palpable. We will conclude with a final and grave reason, as it seems to us, for noticing this serious mistake on the part of Baron Alderson.

That learned judge is much deceived if he imagines that there are not, among the chartists, men possessed of sufficient information to detect such juggling, and make the most of it. Those active and mischievous agents of the chartists who live by lecturing will do more with such a charge as this, than they could do with all the misery in England for the next twelve months. In any common history of the French Revolution, they have the proof against Mr. Baron Alderson under their hands. The grade of education and intellect they address, is particularly prone to accept a brick as a specimen of a house, and its ready conclusion from such an exposition as this is, that the whole system which rules and restrains it is a falsehood and a cheat.

It was but the other day that Mr. Baron Alderson stated to some chartist prisoners, as a fact which everybody knew, that any man in England who was industrious and persevering could obtain political power. Are there no industrious and persevering men in England on whom this comfortable doctrine casts a slur? We rather think the chartist lecturers might find out some.

THE PARADISE AT TOOTING

WHEN it first became known that a virulent and fatal epidemic had broken out in Mr. Drouet's farming establishment for pauper children at Tooting, the comfortable flourish of trumpets usual on such occasions (Sydney Smith's admirable description of it will be fresh in the minds of many of our readers) was performed as a matter of course. Of all similar establishments on earth, that at Tooting was the most admirable. Of all similar contractors on earth, Mr. Drouet was the most disinterested, zealous, and unimpeachable. Of all the wonders ever wondered at, nothing perhaps had ever occurred more wonderful than the outbreak and rapid increase of a disorder so horrible, in a place so perfectly regulated. There was no warning of its approach. Nothing was less to be expected. The farmed children were slumbering in the lap of peace and plenty; Mr. Drouet, the farmer, was slumbering with an easy conscience, but with one eye perpetually open, to keep watch upon the blessings he diffused, and upon the happy infants under his paternal charge; when, in a moment the destroyer was upon them, and Tooting churchyard became too small for the piles of children's coffins that were carried out of this Elysium every day.

The learned coroner for the country of Surrey deemed it quite unnecessary to hold any inquests on these dead children, being as perfectly satisfied in his own mind that Mr. Drouet's farm was the best of all possible farms, as ever the innocent Candide was that the great chateau of the great Baron Thunder-ten Trouekh was the best of all possible chateaux. Presuming that this learned functionary is amenable to some authority or other, and that he will be duly complimented on his sagacity, we will refer to the proceedings before a very different kind of coroner, Mr. Wakley, and his deputy Mr. Mills. But that certain of the miserable little creatures removed from Tooting happened to die within Mr. Wakley's jurisdiction, it is by no means unlikely that a committee might have sprung into existence by this time, for presenting Mr. Drouet with some magnificent testimonial, as a mark of public respect and sympathy.

Mr. Wakley, however, being of little faith, holds inquests, and even manifests a disposition to institute a very searching inquiry into the causes of these horrors; rather thinking that such grievous effects must have some grievous causes. Remembering that there is a public institution called the "Board of Health," Mr. Wakley summons before him Dr. Grainger, an inspector acting under that board, who has examined Mr. Drouet's Elysium, and has drawn up a report concerning it.

It them comes out—truth is so perverse—that Mr. Drouet is not altogether that golden farmer he was supposed to be. It appears that there is a little alloy in his composition. The "extreme closeness, oppression, and foulness of air" in that supposed heaven upon earth over which he presides, "exceeds in offensiveness anything ever yet witnessed by the inspector, in apartments in hospitals, or elsewhere, occupied by the sick." He had a bad habit of putting four cholera patients in one bed. He has a weakness in respect of leaving the sick to take care of themselves, surrounded by every offensive, indecent, and barbarous circumstance that can aggravate the horrors of their condition and increase the dangers of infection. He is so ignorant, or so criminally careless, that he has taken none of the easy precautions, and provided himself with none of the simple remedies, expressly enjoined by the Board of Health in their official announcement published in the *Gazette*, and distributed all over the country. The experience of all the medical observers of cholera, in all parts of the world, is not in an instant overthrown by Mr. Drouet's purity, for he had unfortunately one fortnight's warning of the impending danger, which he utterly disregarded. He has been admonished by the authorities to take only a certain number of unfortunates into his farm, and he increases that number immensely at his own pleasure, for his own profit. His establishment is crammed. It is in no respect a fit place for the reception of the throng shut up in it. The dietary of the children is so unwholesome and insufficient, that they climb secretly over palings, and pick out scraps of sustenance from the tubs of hog-wash. Their clothing by day, and their covering by night, are shamefully defective. Their rooms are cold, damp, dirty, and rotten. In a word, the age of miracles is past, and of all conceivable places in which pestilence might—or rather *must*—be expected to break out, and to make direful ravages, Mr. Drouet's model farm stands foremost.

In addition to these various proofs of his mortal fallibility, Mr. Drouet, even when he is told what to do to save life, has an awkward habit of prevaricating, and not doing it. He also bullies his assistants, in the inspectors' presence, when they show an inclination to reveal disagreeable truths. He has a pleasant brother—a man of an amiable eccentricity—who besides being active, for all improper purposes, in the farm, is "with difficulty restrained" from going to Kensington "to thrash the guardians" of that Union for proposing to remove their children! The boys under Mr. Drouet's fostering protection are habitually knocked down, beaten, and brutally used. They are put on short diet if they complain. They are "very lean and emaciated." Mr. Drouet's system is admirable, but it entails upon them such slight evils as "wasting of the limbs, debility, toils, etc." and a more dreadful aggravation of the itch than a medical witness of great experience has ever beheld in thirty years' practice. A kick, which would be nothing to a child in sound health, becomes, under Mr. Drouet's course of managment, a serious wound. Boys who were intelligent before going to Mr. Drouet, lose their animation afterwards (so swears a Guardian) and become fools. The surgeon of St. Pancras reported, five months ago, of the excellent Mr. Drouet, "that a great deal of severity, not to use a harsh term,"—but why not a harsh term, surgeon, if the occasion require it?—"has been exercised by the masters in authority, as well as some out of authority," meaning, we presume, the amiably eccentric brother. Everything, in short, that Mr. Drouet does, or causes to be done, or suffers to be done, is vile, vicious, and cruel. All this is distinctly in proof before the coroner's jury, and therefore we see no reason to abstain from summing it up.

But there is blame elsewhere; and though it cannot diminish the heavy amount of blame that rests on this sordid contractor's head, there is great blame elsewhere. The parish authorities who sent these children to such a place, and, seeing them in it, left them there, and showed no resolute determination to reform it altogether, are culpable in the highest degree. The Poor-Law Inspector who visited this place, and did not in the strongest terms condemn it, is not less culpable. The Poor-Law Commissioners, if they had the power to issue positive orders for its better management (a point which is, however, in question), were as culpable as any of the rest.

It is wonderful to see how those who, by slurring the matter when they should have been active in it, have become, in some sort, *participes criminis*, desire to make the best of it, even now. The Poor-Law Inspector thinks that the issuing of an order by the Poor-Law Commissioners, prohibiting boards of guardians from sending children to such an institution, would have been "a very strong measure." As if very strong cases require very weak measures, or there were no natural affinity between the measures and the case! He certainly did object to the children sleeping three in a bed, and Mr. Drouet afterwards told him he had reduced the number to two—its increase to four when the disease was raging being, we suppose, a special sanitary arrangement. He did not make any recommendation as to ventilation. He did not call the children privately before him, to inquire how they were treated. He considers the dietary a fair dietary—IF *proper quantities were given where no precise quantity is specified*. He thinks that, with care, the premises might have been occupied without injury to health, IF *all the accommodation on the premises had been judiciously applied*. As though a man should say he felt convinced he could live pretty comfortably on the top of the monument, IF a handsome suite of furnished apartments were constructed there expressly for him and a select circle came up to dinner every day!

These children were farmed to Mr. Drouet at four shillings and sixpence a week each; and some of the officials seem to set store by its being a great deal of money, and to think exoneration lies in that. It may be a very sufficient sum, considering that Mr. Drouet was entitled to the profits of the children's work besides; but this seems to us to be no part of the question. If the payment had been fourteen and sixpence a week each, the blame of leaving the children to Mr. Drouet's tender mercies without sufficient protection, and of leaving

Mr. Drouet to make his utmost profit without sufficient check, would have been exactly the same. When a man keeps his horse at livery, he does not take the corn for granted, because he pays five-and-twenty shillings a week. In the history of this calamity, one undoubted predisposing cause was insufficient clothing. What says Mr. William Robert James, solicitor and clerk to the Board of Guardians of the Holborn Union, on that head? Mr. Drouet "*told him in conversation* (!) that the four and sixpence a week would include clothing. *No particular description of clothing was mentioned.*" Is it any wonder that the flannel petticoats worn by the miserable female children, in the severest weather of this winter, could be—as was publicly stated in another metropolitan union a few days ago—"read through"?

This same Mr. James produces minutes of visits made by deputations of guardians to the Tooting Paradise. Thus:—

> "As regards the complaint of Hannah Sleight, as to the insufficiency of food, we believe it to be unfounded. Elizabeth Male having complained that on her recent visit she found her children in a dirty state, her children had our particular attention, and we beg to state that there was no just cause of complaint on her part."

It being clear to the meanest capacity that Elizabeth's Male's children not being dirty then, never could by possibility have been dirty at any antecedent time.

But it appears that this identical James, solicitor and clerk to the Board of Guardians of the Holborn Union, had a valuable system of his own for eliciting the truth, which was, to ask the boys in Mr. Drouet's presence if they had anything to complain of, and when they answered "Yes," to recommend that they should be instantly horsewhipped. We learn this from the following extraordinary minute of one of these official visits:—

> "We beg to report to the board our having on Tuesday, the 9th of May, visited Mr. Drouet's establishment to ascertain the state of the children belonging to this union. We were there at the time of dinner being supplied, and in our opinion the meat provided was good, but the potatoes were bad. We visited the schoolrooms, dormitories, and workshops. *Everything appeared clean and comfortable, yet we are of opinion that the new sleeping rooms for infants on the ground floor have a very unhealthy smell.* The girls belonging to the union looked very well. *The boys appeared sickly*, which induced us to question them as to whether they had any cause of complaint as to supply of food or otherwise. About forty of them held up their hands to intimate their dissatisfaction, upon which Mr. Drouet's conduct became violent. He called the boys liars, described some that had held up their hands as the worst boys in the school, and said that if he had done them justice, he would have followed out the suggestion of Mr. James, and well thrashed them. (Laughter.) We then began to question the boys individually, and some of them complained of not having sufficient bread at their breakfast. Whilst pressing the inquiry, Mr. Drouet's conduct became more violent. He said we were acting unfairly in the mode of inquiry, that we ought to be satisfied of his character without such proceedings, and that we had no right to pursue the inquiry in the way we were doing, and that he would be glad to get rid of the children. To avoid further altercation we left, not having fully completed the object of our visit."

If Mr. Drouet were sincere in saying he would be glad to get rid of the children, he must be in a very complacent frame of mind at present when he has succeeded in getting rid, for ever, of so many. But the general complacency, on the occasion of these visits is marvellous. Hear Mr. Winch, one of the guardians of the poor for the Holborn Union, who was one of the visiting party at the Tooting Paradise on this 9th of May:—

> "I was in company with Mr. Mayes and Mr. Rebbeck. The children were at dinner. They were all standing; I was informed they never sit at their meals. I tasted the meat, and I cut open about 100 potatoes at different tables, *none of which were fit to eat*. They were black and diseased. I told Mr. Drouet the potatoes were very bad. He replied that they cost him £7 a ton. The children had no other vegetables. *I told Mr. Drouet I should give them other food. He made no reply. I also told Mr. Drouet I thought the newly erected rooms smelt unhealthy.* Mr. Mayes said it was a pity when he was building he had not made the rooms higher; when *Mr. Drouet said he would have enough to do if he paid attention to everybody.* We went through some of the sleeping-rooms, which appeared very clean. The girls looked well; but the boys, who were mustered in the schoolroom, appeared very sickly and unhealthy. *Mr. Drouet, his brother, and the schoolmaster were present.* Mr. Rebbeck said to the boys: 'Now, if you have anything to complain of—want of food, or anything else—hold up your hands'; and from thirty to forty held up their hands. *Mr. Drouet became very violent*, and said we were treating him in an ungentlemanly manner; he said that some of the boys who had held up their hands were liars, and scoundrels, and rascals. He said we were using him very unfairly; *that his character was at stake;* and if we had anything to complain of, that was not the way to proceed. *One of the boys whom I questioned told me they had not bread enough either for breakfast or supper; and, on comparing their dietary with that in the workhouse, I think such is the case.* In consequence of the confusion, we left Mr. Drouet's without signing the visitors' book. I did not make any motion in the Board of Guardians for the removal of the children. I again visited Mr. Drouet's establishment on the 30th of May. The potatoes were then of excellent quality. *I went into the pantry, and was surprised to find the bread was not weighed out. We weigh it out in the union, as we find that is the only way to give satisfaction.* The loaves at Mr. Drouet's were cut into sixteen pieces without being weighed. I saw no supply of salt in the dining-room, but some of the boys who had salt in bags were bartering their salt for potatoes. *I did not ask the children whether they had been punished in consequence of what had taken place at my previous visit.* We were in the establishment for an hour and a half or two hours on the 30th. *We then expressed our satisfaction at what we witnessed.* We made no further inquiry as to what had occurred on our previous visit. I made no suggestion to the board for the improvement of the dietary. *We had no means of ascertaining that the children received the amount of food mentioned in the diet-table.*"

But we expressed our satisfaction at what we witnessed. Oh dear, yes! Our unanimity was delightful. Nobody complained. The boys had had ample encouragement to complain. They had seen Mr. Drouet standing glowering by, on the previous occasion. They had heard him break out about liars, and scoundrels, and rascals. They had understood that his precious character—immeasurably more precious than the existence of any number of pauper children—was at stake. They had had the benefit of a little fatherly advice and caution from him, in the interval. They were in a position, moral and physical, to be high-spirited, bold and open. Yet not a boy complained. We went home to our Holborn Union, rejoicing. Our clerk was in tip-top spirits about the thrashing joke. Everything was comfortable and pleasant. Of all places in the world, how could the cholera ever break out, after this, in Mr. Drouet's Paradise at Tooting!

If we had been left to the so much vaunted self-government, it might have been unanswered still, and the Drouet testimonial might have been in full vigour. But the Board of Health—an institution of which every day's experience attests in some new form the value and importance—has settled the question. Plainly thus:—The cholera, or some unusually malignant form of typhus assimilating itself to that disease, broke out in Mr. Drouet's farm for children, because it was brutally conducted, vilely kept, preposterously inspected, dishonestly defended, a disgrace to a Christian community, and a stain upon a civilised land.

THE TOOTING FARM

On Tuesday last the coroner's jury, after a long inquiry before Mr. Wakley, returned a verdict of manslaughter against the Tooting Farmer, coupled with an expression of their regret at the defects of the Poor-Law Act, and of their hope that establishments similar to that at Tooting would soon cease to exist.

Nothing came out in the further progress of the inquiry to soften those results of evidence which we summed up generally last week. The new testimony did anything but weaken the case against the person now criminally inculpated. On the contrary, the physical deterioration of the surviving children, as a body, was more affectingly and convincingly shown than before. What good legal assistance could do for the defence, was done, but it could do nothing. What deplorable shifts and attempts at evasion on the part of an educated witness could do on the same side, was also done. But it could do nothing either.

We observe that one metropolitan Board of Guardians considers itself ill-used by the public comments that have been made on this case, and is about to enter on a voluntary defence of itself. Any individual or body of individuals made the subject of uncomplimentary newspaper remark, *is* ill-used as a matter of course. It never was otherwise. The precedents are numerous. Mr. Thurtell was very bitter on this point, and so was Mr. Greenacre. But while we recognise a broad distinction between the culpability of those who consigned hundreds of children to this hateful place, too easily satisfied by formal, periodical visitation of it—and the guilt of its administrator, who knew it at all hours and times, at its worst as well as at its best, and who drove a dangerous and cruel traffic, for his own profit, at his own peril,—we must take leave to repeat that the Board of Guardians concerned are grossly in the wrong. The plain truth is, that they took for granted what they should have thoroughly sifted and ascertained. A certain establishment for the reception of pauper children exists. One Board of Guardians sends its children there: other Boards of Guardians follow one another in its wake, like sheep. We will assume that the existing accommodation in their Union was insufficient for the reception of these children. For aught we know, it may, in the case of the St. Pancras workhouse, for example, have been perfectly inadequate. But that is no reason for sending them to Tooting, and no ground of defence for having sent them there. The sending them to Norfolk Island, on the banks of the Niger, might be justified as well, by the same logic.

We have no intention of prejudging a case which is now to be brought to issue before a criminal court. It will be decided upon the law, and upon the evidence, and there is not the least fear that the general humanity will unjustly prejudice the party impeached. That is not at all a common vice of such a trial in England. What we desire to do, is to point out in a few words why we hold it to be particularly desirable that this case, in all its relations, should be rigidly dealt with upon its own merits; and why that vague disposition to smooth over the things that be, which sometimes creeps into the most important English proceedings, should, in this instance of all others, have no pin's-point of place to rest upon.

In town and country, for some months past, we have been trying and punishing with necessary severity certain seditious men who did their utmost to incite the discontented to disturbance of the public peace. We have, within the last year, counted our special constables by tens of thousands, and our loyal addresses to the throne by tens of scores. All these demonstrations have been necessary, but some of them have been sad necessities, and, on the subsidence of the natural indignation of the moment, have not left much occasion for triumph.

The chartist leaders who are now undergoing their various sentences in various prisons, found the mass of their audience among the discontented poor. The foremost of them had not the plea of want to urge for themselves; but their misrepresentations were addressed to the toiling multitudes, on whom social irregularities impossible to be avoided, and complicated commercial circumstances difficult to be explained to them, pressed heavily. There is no doubt that among this numerous class, chartist principles are rife; that wherever the class is found in a large amount, there, also, is a great intensity of discontent. There are few poor working-men in the kingdom who *might* not find themselves next year, next month, next week, in the position of those fathers whose children were sent to Tooting; and there are probably very few poor working-men who have not thought "this might be my child's case, to-morrow."

No opportunity of doing something towards the education of such men in the conviction that the State is unfeignedly mindful of them, and truly anxious to redress their tangible and obvious wrongs, could be plainer than that which now arises. If the system of farming pauper children cannot exist without the danger of another Tooting Farm being weeded by the grisly hands of Want, Disease, and Death, let it be now abolished. If the Poor-Law, as it stands, be not efficient for the prevention of such inhuman evils, let it be now rendered more efficient. If it has unfortunately happened, though by no man's deliberate intention or malignity—as who can doubt it has?—that the children of sundry poor men and women have been carried to untimely graves, who might have lived and thriven, let there be seen a resolute determination that the like shall never happen any more. It is not only even-handed justice, but it is clear, straightforward policy. It is the correction of widely spread and artfully fomented prejudice, dissatisfaction, and suspicion. It is to challenge and to win the confidence of the poor man on his tenderest point, and at his own fireside.

But to waste the occasion in play with foolscap and red tape; to bewilder all these listening ears with mere official gabble about Boards, and Inspectors, and Guardians, and responsibility, and non-responsibility, and divided responsibility, and powers, and clauses, and sections, and chapters, until the remedy is crushed to pieces in a mill of words; will be to swell the mischief to an extent that is incalculable. There are scores of heads in the mills of Lancashire and the shops of Birmingham, sufficiently confused already by something more perplexing than the rattling of looms or the beating of hammers. Such dazed men must be spoken to distinctly. They will hear them, and hear aright. Let the debtor and creditor account between the governors and the governed be kept in a fair, bold hand, that all may read, and the governed will soon read it for themselves, and dispense with the interpreters who are paid by chartist clubs.

MISCELLANIES FROM "HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

(1850–1859)

THE "GOOD" HIPPOPOTAMUS

Our correspondent, the Raven in the Happy Family, suggested in these pages, not long ago, the propriety of a meeting being held, to settle the preliminary arrangements for erecting an equestrian statue to the Hippopotamus. We are happy to have received some exclusive information on this interesting subject, and to be authorised to lay it before our readers.

It appears that Mr. Hamet Safi Cannana, the Arabian gentleman who acts as Secretary to H. R. H. (His Rolling Hulk) the Hippopotamus, has been, for some time, reflecting that he is under great obligations to that distinguished creature. Mr. Hamet Safi Cannana (who is remarkable for candour) has not hesitated to say that, but for his accidental public connection with H. R. H., he Mr. Cannana would no doubt have remained to the end of his days an obscure individual, perfectly unknown to fame, and possessing no sort of claim on the public attention. H. R. H. having been the means of getting Mr. Cannana's name into print on several occasions, and having afforded Mr. Cannana various opportunities of plunging into the newspapers, Mr. Cannana has felt himself under a debt of gratitude to H. R. H., requiring some public acknowledgment and return. Mr. Cannana, after much consideration, has been able to think of no return, at once so notorious and so cheap, as a monument to H. R. H., to be erected at the public expense. We cannot positively state that Mr. Cannana founded this idea on our Correspondent's suggestion—for, indeed, we have reason to believe that he promulgated it before our Correspondent's essay appeared—but, we trust it is not claiming too much for the authority of our Correspondent to hope that it may have confirmed Mr. Cannana in a very noble, a very sensible, a very spirited, undertaking.

We proceed to record its history, as far as it has yet gone.

Mr. Hamet Safi Cannana, having conceived the vast original idea of erecting a Public Monument to H. R. H., set himself to consider next, by what adjective H. R. H. could be most attractively distinguished in the advertisements of that Monument. After much painful and profound cogitation, Mr. Cannana was suddenly inspired with the wonderful thought of calling him the "Good" Hippopotamus!

This is so obviously an inspiration,—a fancy reserved, through all the previous ages of the world, for this extraordinary genius,—that we have been at some pains to trace it, if possible, to its source. But, as usually happens in such cases, Mr. Cannana can give no account of the process by which he arrived at the result. Mr. Cannana's description of himself, rendered into English, would be, that he was "bothered"; that he had thought of a number of adjectives, as, the oily Hippopotamus, the bland Hippopotamus, the bathing Hippopotamus, the expensive Hippopotamus, the valiant Hippopotamus, the sleepy Hippopotamus, when, in a moment, as it were in the space of a flash of lightning, he found he had written down, without knowledge why or wherefore, and without being at all able to account for it, those enduring words, the "Good" Hippopotamus.

Having got the phrase down, in black and white, for speedy publication, the next step was to explain it to an unimaginative public. This process Mr. Cannana can describe. He relates, that when he came to consider the vast quantities of milk of which the Hippopotamus partook, his amazing consumption of meal, his unctuous appetite for dates, his jog-trot manner of going, his majestic power of sleep, he felt that all these qualities pointed him out emphatically, as the "Good" Hippopotamus. He never howled, like the Hyena; he never roared, like the Lion; he never screeched, like the Parrot; he never damaged the tops of high trees, like the Giraffe; he never put a trunk in people's way, like the Elephant; he never hugged anybody, like the Bear; he never projected a forked tongue, like the Serpent. He was an easy, basking, jolly, slow, inoffensive, eating and drinking Hippopotamus. Therefore he was, supremely, the "Good" Hippopotamus.

When Mr. Cannana observed the subject from a closer point of view, he began to find that H. R. H. was not only the "Good," but a Benefactor to the whole human race. He toiled not, neither did he spin, truly—but he bathed in cool water when the weather was hot, he slept when he came out of the bath; and he bathed and slept, serenely, for the public gratification. People, of all ages and conditions, rushed to see him bathe, and sleep, and feed; and H. R. H. had no objection. As H. R. H. lay luxuriously winking at the striving public, one warm summer day, Mr. Cannana distinctly perceived that the whole of H. R. H.'s time and energy was devoted to the service of that public. Mr. Cannana's eye, wandering round the hall, and observing, there assembled, a number of persons labouring under the terrible disorder of having nothing particular to do, and too much time to do it in, moistened, as he reflected that the whole of H. R. H.'s life, in giving them some temporary excitement, was an act of charity; was "devoted" (Mr. Cannana has since printed these words) "to the protection and affectionate care of the sick and the afflicted." He perceived, upon the instant, that H. R. H.

was a Hippopotamus of "unsurpassed worth," and he drew up an advertisement so describing him.

Mr. Cannana, having brought his project thus far on its road to prosperity, without stumbling over any obstacle in the way, now considered it expedient to impart the great design to some other person or persons who would go hand in hand with him. He concluded (having some knowledge of the world) that those who had lifted themselves into any degree of notoriety by means of H. R. H., would be the most likely (but only as best knowing him) to possess a knowledge of his unsurpassed worth. It is an instance of Mr. Cannana's sagacity, that he communicated with the Milkman who supplies the Zoological Gardens.

The Milkman immediately put down his name for ten pounds, his wife's for five pounds, and each of their twin children for two pounds ten. He added, in a spirited letter, addressed to Mr. Cannana, and a copy of which is now before us, "You may rely on my assistance in any way, or in every way, that may be useful to your patriotic project, of erecting a Monument to the 'Good' Hippopotamus. We have not Monuments enough. We want more. H. R. H.'s consumption of milk has far exceeded, from the first moment of his unwearied devotion of himself to the happiness of Mankind, any animal's with which I am acquainted; and that nature must be base indeed, that would not vibrate to your appeal." Emboldened by this sympathy, Mr. Cannana next addressed himself to the Mealman, who replied, "This is as it should be," and enclosed a subscription of seven pounds ten—with a request that it might be stated in the published list that the number of his house was ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FOUR B, at the right-hand corner of High Street and Blue Lion Street, and that it had no connection with any similar establishments in the same neighbourhood, which were all impositions.

Mr. Cannana now proceeded to form a Committee. The Milkman and the Mealman both consented to serve. Also the two Policemen usually on duty (under Mr. Cannana's auspices), in H. R. H.'s den; the principal Money-taker at the gardens; the Monkey who, early in the season, was appointed (by Mr. Cannana) to a post on H. R. H.'s grounds; and all the artificers employed (under Mr. Cannana's directions), in constructing the existing accommodation for H. R. H.'s entire dedication of his life and means to the consolation of the afflicted. Still, Mr. Cannana deemed it necessary to his project to unite in one solid phalanx all the leading professional keepers of Show Animals in and near London; and this extensive enterprise he immediately pursued, by circular-letter signed Hamet Safi Cannana, setting forth the absolute and indispensable necessity of "raising a permanent monument in honour of the 'Good' Hippopotamus, which, while it becomes a record of gratitude for his self-sacrifices in the cause of charity, shall serve as a guide and example to all who wish to become the benefactors of mankind."

The response to this letter, was of the most gratifying nature. Mr. Wombwell's keepers joined the Committee; all the keepers at the Surrey Zoological enrolled themselves without loss of time; the exhibitor of the dancing dogs came forward with alacrity; the proprietor of "Punch's Opera, containing the only singing dogs in Europe," became a Committee-man; and the hoarse gentleman who trains the birds to draw carriages, and the white mice to climb the tight rope and go up ladders, gave in his adhesion, in a manner that did equal honour to his head and heart. The Italian boys were once thought of, but these Mr. Cannana rejected as low; for all Mr. Cannana's proceedings are characterised by a delicate gentility.

The Committee, having been thus constituted, and being reinforced by the purveyors to the different animals (who are observed to be very strong in the cause) held a meeting of their body, at which Mr. Cannana explained his general views. Mr. Cannana said, that he had proposed to the various keepers of Show Animals then present, to form themselves into that union for the erection of a Monument to the "Good" Hippopotamus, because, laying aside individual jealousies, it appeared to him that the cause of that animal of "unsurpassed worth," was, in fact, the common cause of all Show Animals. There was one point of view (Mr. Cannana said) in which the design they had met to advance appeared to him to be exceedingly important. Some Show Animals had not done well of late. Pathetic appeals had been made to the public on their behalf; but the Public had appeared a little to mistrust the Animals—why, he could not imagine—and their funds did not bear that proportion to their expenditure which was to be desired. Now, here were they, the Representatives of those Show Animals, about, one and all, to address the Public on the subject of the "Good" Hippopotamus. If they took the solid ground they ought to take; if they united in telling the Public without any misgiving that he was a creature "of unsurpassed worth," that "his whole life was devoted to the protection and affectionate care of the sick and the afflicted"; that "his self-sacrifices demanded the public admiration and gratitude"; and that he was "a guide and example to all who wished to become the benefactors of Mankind";—if they did this, what he, Mr. Cannana, said, was, that the Public would judge of their representations of their Show Animals generally, by the self-evident nature of these statements; and their Show Animals, whatever they had been in the past, could not fail to be handsomely supported by the Public in future, and to win their utmost confidence.

This position was universally applauded, but it was reduced to still plainer terms, by the straight-forward gentleman with the hoarse voice who trains the birds and mice.

"In short," said that gentleman, addressing Mr. Cannana, "if we puts out this here 'Tizement, the Public will know in a minute that there isn't a morsel of Humbug about us?"

Mr. Cannana replied, with earnestness, "Exactly so! My honourable friend has stated precisely what I mean!"

This distinct statement of the case was much applauded, and gave the greatest satisfaction to the assembled company.

It was then suggested by the Secretary, to Mr. Tyler's tiger, that several thousand circulars, embodying these statements (with a promise that the collector should shortly call for a subscription) ought to be immediately signed by Mr. Hamet Safi Cannana, addressed, and posted. This work Mr. Cannana undertook to superintend and we understand that some ten thousand of these letters have since been delivered. The gentleman in waiting on Mr. Wombwell's Sloth (who is of an ardent temperament) was of opinion that the company should instantly vote subscriptions towards the Monument from the funds of their respective establishments: considering the fact, that the funds did not belong to them, of secondary importance to the erection of a Monument to the "Good" Hippopotamus. But, it was resolved to defer this point until the public feeling on the undertaking should have had an opportunity of expressing itself.

This, as far as it has yet reached, is the history of the Monument to the "Good" Hippopotamus. The collector has called, we understand, at a great many houses, but has not yet succeeded in getting into several, in consequence of the entrance being previously occupied by the collector of the Queen's Taxes, going his rounds for the annuity to the young Duke of Cambridge. Whom Heaven preserve!

A CRISIS IN THE AFFAIRS OF MR. JOHN BULL

AS RELATED BY MRS. BULL TO THE CHILDREN [1]

Mrs. Bull and her rising family were seated round the fire, one November evening at dusk, when all was mud, mist, and darkness, out of doors, and a good deal of fog had even got into the family parlour. To say the truth, the parlour was on no occasion fog-proof, and had, at divers notable times, been so misty as to cause the whole Bull family to grope about, in a most confused manner, and make the strangest mistakes. But, there was an excellent ventilator over the family fireplace (not one of Dr. Arnott's, though it was of the same class, being an excellent invention, called Common Sense), and hence, though the fog was apt to get into the parlour through a variety of chinks, it soon got out again, and left the Bulls at liberty to see what o'clock it was, by the solid, steady-going family time-piece: which went remarkably well in the long run, though it was apt, at times, to be a trifle too slow.

Mr. Bull was dozing in his easy chair, with his pocket-handkerchief drawn over his head. Mrs. Bull, always industrious, was hard at work, knitting. The children were grouped in various attitudes around the blazing fire. Master C. J. London (called after his Godfather), who had been rather late at his exercise, sat with his chin resting, in something of a thoughtful and penitential manner, on his slate, and his slate resting on his knees. Young Jonathan—a cousin of the little Bulls, and a noisy, overgrown lad—was making a tremendous uproar across the yard, with a new plaything. Occasionally, when his noise reached the ears of Mr. Bull, the good gentleman moved impatiently in his chair, and muttered "Con—found that boy in the stripes, I wish he wouldn't make such a fool of himself!"

"He'll quarrel with his new toy soon, I know," observed the discreet Mrs. Bull, "and then he'll begin to knock it about. But we mustn't expect to find old heads on young shoulders."

"That can't be, Ma," said Master C. J. London, who was a sleek, shining-faced boy.

"And why, then, did you expect to find an old head on Young England's shoulders?" retorted Mrs. Bull, turning quick on him.

"I didn't expect to find an old head on Young England's shoulders!"

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[1] Readers will easily detect the references to the "No Popery" controversies of 1850, to Cardinal Wiseman, Dr. Pusey, and other theologians of the time. Dickens's antipathy to anything Roman is well known, and may be illustrated in abundance from the *Child's History of England.*

cried Master C. J. London, putting his left-hand knuckles to his right eye.

"You didn't expect it, you naughty boy?" said Mrs. Bull.

"No!" whimpered Master C. J. London. "I am sure I never did. Oh, oh, oh!"

"Don't go on in that way, don't!" said Mrs. Bull, "but behave better in future. What did you mean by playing with Young England at all?"

"I didn't mean any harm!" cried Master C. J. London, applying, in his increased distress, the knuckles of his right hand to his right eye, and the knuckles of his left hand to his left eye.

"I dare say you didn't!" returned Mrs. Bull. "Hadn't you had warning enough about playing with candles and candlesticks? How often have you been told that your poor father's house, long before you were born, was in danger of being reduced to ashes by candles and candlesticks? And when Young England and his companions began to put their shirts on, over their clothes, and to play all sorts of fantastic tricks in them, why didn't you come and tell your poor father and me, like a dutiful C. J. London?"

"Because the rubric——" Master C. J. London was beginning, when Mrs. Bull took him up short.

"Don't talk to me about the Rubric, or you'll make it worse!" said Mrs. Bull, shaking her head at him. "Just exactly what the Rubric meant then, it means now; and just exactly what it didn't mean then, it don't mean now. You are taught to act, according to the spirit, not the letter; and you know what its spirit must be, or *you* wouldn't be. No, C. J. London!" said Mrs. Bull, emphatically. "If there were any candles or candlesticks in the spirit of your lesson-book, Master Wiseman would have been my boy, and not you!"

Here, Master C. J. London fell a-crying more grievously than before, sobbing, "Oh, Ma, Master Wiseman with his red legs, your boy! Oh, oh, oh!"

"Will you be quiet," returned Mrs. Bull, "and let your poor father rest? I am ashamed of you. *You* to go and play with a parcel of sentimental girls, and dandy boys! Is *that* your bringing up?"

"I didn't know they were fond of Master Wiseman," protested Master C. J. London, still crying.

"You didn't know, Sir!" retorted Mr. Bull. "Don't tell me! Then you ought to have known. Other people knew. You were told often enough, at the time, what it would come to. You didn't want a ghost, I suppose, to warn you that when they got to candlesticks, they'd get to candles; and that when they got to candles, they'd get to lighting 'em; and that when they began to put their shirts on outside, and to play at monks and friars, it was as natural that Master Wiseman should be encouraged to put on a pair of red-stockings, and a red hat, and to commit I don't know what other Tom-fooleries and make a perfect Guy Fawkes of himself in more ways than one. Is it because you are a Bull, that you are not to be roused till they shake scarlet close to your very eyes?" said Mrs. Bull indignantly.

Master C. J. London, still repeating "Oh, oh, oh!" in a very plaintive manner, screwed his knuckles into his eyes until there appeared considerable danger of his screwing his eyes out of his head. But, little John (who though of a spare figure was a very spirited boy), started up from the little bench on which he sat; gave Master C. J. London a hearty pat on the back (accompanied, however, with a slight poke in the ribs); and told him that if Master Wiseman, or Young England, or any of those fellows, wanted anything for himself, he (little John) was the boy to give it him. Hereupon, Mrs. Bull, who was always proud of the child, and always had been, since his measure was first taken for an entirely new suit of clothes, to wear in Common, could not refrain from catching him up on her knee and kissing him with great affection, while the whole family expressed their delight in various significant ways.

"You are a noble boy, little John," said Mrs. Bull, with a mother's pride, "and that's the fact, after everything is said and done!"

"I don't know about that, Ma"; quoth little John, whose blood was evidently up; "but if these chaps and their backers, the Bulls of Rome——"

Here Mr. Bull, who was only half asleep, kicked out in such an alarming manner, that for some seconds, his boots gyrated fitfully all over the family hearth, filling the whole circle with consternation. For, when Mr. Bull *did* kick, his kick was tremendous. And he always kicked, when the Bulls of Rome were mentioned.

Mrs. Bull, holding up her finger as an injunction to the children to keep quiet, sagely observed Mr. Bull from the opposite side of the fireplace, until he calmly dozed again, when she recalled the scattered family to their former positions, and spoke in a low tone.

"You must be very careful," said the worthy lady, "how you mention that name; for your poor father has so many unpleasant experiences of those Bulls of Rome—Bless the man! he'll do somebody a mischief."

Mr. Bull, lashing out again more violently than before, upset the fender, knocked down the fire-irons, kicked over the brass footman, and, whisking his silk handkerchief off his head, chased the Pussy on the rug clean out of the room into the passage, and so out of the street-door into the night; the Pussy having (as was well-known to the children in general) originally strayed from the Bulls of Rome into Mr. Bull's assembled family. After the achievement of this crowning feat, Mr. Bull came back, and in a highly excited state performed a sort of war-dance in his top-boots, all over the parlour. Finally, he sank into his arm-chair, and covered himself up again.

Master C. J. London, who was by no means sure that Mr. Bull in his heat would not come down upon him for the lateness of his exercise, took refuge behind his slate and behind little John, who was a perfect gamecock. But, Mr. Bull having concluded his war-dance without injury to any one, the boy crept out, with the rest of the family, to the knees of Mrs. Bull, who thus addressed them, taking little John into her lap before she began:

"The B.'s of R.," said Mrs. Bull, getting, by this prudent device, over the obnoxious words, "caused your poor father a world of trouble, before any one of you were born. They pretended to be related to us, and to have some influence in our family; but it can't be allowed for a single moment—nothing will ever induce your poor father to hear of it; let them disguise or constrain themselves now and then, as they will, they are, by nature, an insolent, audacious, oppressive, intolerable race."

Here little John doubled his fists, and began squaring at the Bulls of Rome, as he saw those pretenders with his mind's eye. Master C. J. London, after some considerable reflection, made a show of squaring, likewise.

"In the days of your great, great, great, great grandfather," said Mrs. Bull, dropping her voice still lower, as she glanced at Mr. Bull in his repose, "the Bulls of Rome were not so utterly hateful to our family as they are at present. We didn't know them so well, and our family were very ignorant and low in the world. But we have gone on advancing in every generation since then; and now we are taught by all our family history and experience, and by the most limited exercise of our national faculties, That our knowledge, liberty, progress, social welfare and happiness, are wholly irreconcilable and inconsistent with them. That the Bulls of Rome are not only the enemies of our family, but of the whole human race. That wherever they go, they perpetuate misery, oppression, darkness, and ignorance. That they are easily made the tools of the worst of men for the worst of purposes; and that they *cannot* be endured by your poor father, or by any man, woman, or child, of common sense, who has the least connection with us."

Little John, who had gradually left off squaring, looked hard at his aunt, Miss Eringobragh, Mr. Bull's sister, who was grovelling on the ground, with her head in the ashes. This unfortunate lady had been, for a length of time, in a horrible condition of mind and body, and presented a most lamentable spectacle of disease, dirt, rags, superstition, and degradation.

Mrs. Bull, observing the direction of the child's glance, smoothed little John's hair, and directed her next observations to him.

"Ah! You may well look at the poor thing, John!" said Mrs. Bull; "for the Bulls of Rome have had far too much to do with her present state. There have been many other causes at work to destroy the strength of her constitution, but the Bulls of Rome have been at the bottom of it; and, depend upon it, wherever you see a condition at all resembling hers, you will find, on inquiry, that the sufferer has allowed herself to be dealt with by the Bulls of Rome. The cases of squalor and ignorance, in all the world most like your aunt's, are to be found in their own household; on the steps of their doors; in the heart of their homes. In Switzerland, you may cross a line, no broader than a bridge or a hedge, and know, in an instant, where the Bulls of

Rome have been received, by the condition of the family. Wherever the Bulls of Rome have the most influence, the family is sure to be the most abject. Put your trust in those Bulls, John, and it's in the inevitable order and sequence of things, that you must come to be something like your Aunt, sooner or later."

"I thought the Bulls of Rome had got into difficulties, and run away, Ma?" said little John, looking up into his mother's face inquiringly.

"Why, so they did get into difficulties, to be sure, John," returned Mrs. Bull, "and so they did run away; but, even the Italians who had got thoroughly used to them, found them out, and they were obliged to go and hide in a cupboard, where they still talked big through the key-hole, and presented one of the most contemptible and ridiculous exhibitions that ever were seen on earth. However, they were taken out of the cupboard by some friends of theirs—friends, indeed! who care as much about them as I do for the sea-serpent; but who happened, at the moment, to find it necessary to play at soldiers, to amuse their fretful children, who didn't know what they wanted, and, what was worse, would have it—and so the Bulls got back to Rome. And at Rome they are anything but safe to stay, as you'll find, my dear, one of these odd mornings."

"Then, if they are so unsafe, and so found out, Ma," said Master C. J. London, "how come they to interfere with us, now?"

"Oh, C. J. London!" returned Mrs. Bull, "what a sleepy child you must be, to put such a question! Don't you know that the more they are found out, and the weaker they are, the more important it must be to them to impose upon the ignorant people near them, by pretending to be closely connected with a person so much looked up to as your poor father?"

"Why, of course!" cried little John to his brother. "Oh, you stupid!"

"And I am ashamed to have to repeat, C. J. London," said Mrs. Bull, "that, but for your friend, Young England, and the encouragement you gave to that mewling little Pussy, when it strayed here—don't say you didn't, you naughty boy, for you did!"—

"You know you did!" said little John.

Master C. J. London began to cry again.

"Don't do that," said Mrs. Bull, sharply, "but be a better boy in future! I say, I am ashamed to have to repeat that, but for that, the Bulls of Rome would never have had the audacity to call their connection, Master Wiseman, your poor father's child, and to appoint him, with his red hat and stockings, and his mummery and flummery, to a portion of your father's estates—though, for the matter of that, there is nothing to prevent their appointing him to the Moon except the difficulty of getting him there! And so, your poor father's affairs have been brought to this crisis: that he has to deal with an insult which is perfectly absurd, and yet which he must, for the sake of his family, in all time to come, decisively and seriously deal with, in order to detach himself, once and for ever, from these Bulls of Rome;

and show how impotent they are. There's difficulty and vexation, you have helped to bring upon your father, you bad child!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Master C. J. London. "Oh, I never went to do it. Oh, oh, oh!"

"Hold your tongue!" said Mrs. Bull, "and do a good exercise! Now that your father has turned that Pussy out of doors, go on with your exercise like a man; and let us have no more playing with any one connected with those Bulls of Rome; between whom and you there is a great gulf fixed, as you ought to have known in the beginning. Take your fingers out of your eyes, Sir, and do your exercise!"

"—Or I'll come and pinch you!" said little John.

"John," said Mrs. Bull, "you leave him alone. Keep your eye upon him, and, if you find him relapsing, tell your father."

"Oh, won't I neither!" cried little John.

"Don't be vulgar," said Mrs. Bull. "Now, John, I can trust *you*. Whatever you do, I know you won't wake your father unnecessarily. You are a bold, brave child, and I highly approve of your erecting yourself against Master Wiseman and all that bad set. But, be wary, John; and as you have, and deserve to have, great influence with your father, I am sure you will be careful how you wake him. If he was to make a wild rush, and begin to dance about, on the Platform in the Hall, I don't know where he'd stop."

Little John, getting on his legs, began buttoning his jacket with great firmness and vigour, preparatory to action. Master C. J. London, with a dejected aspect and an occasional sob, went on with his exercise.

MR. BULL'S SOMNABULIST

An extremely difficult case of somnambulism, occurring in the family of that respected gentleman Mr. Bull, and at the present time developing itself without any mitigation of its apparently hopeless symptoms, will furnish the subject of the present paper. Apart from its curious psychological interest, it is worth investigation, as having caused and still causing Mr. Bull great anxiety of mind when he falls into low spirits. I may observe, as one of the medical attendants of the family, that this is not very often the case, all things considered; Mr. Bull being of a sanguine temperament, good-natured to a fault, and highly confident in the strength of his constitution. This confidence, I regret to add, makes him too frequently neglect himself when there is an urgent necessity for his being careful.

The patient in whom are manifested the distressing symptoms of somnambulism I shall describe, is an old woman—Mrs. Abigail Dean. The recognised abbreviation of her almost obsolete Christian name is used for brevity's sake in Mr. Bull's family, and she is always known in the House as Abby Dean.[1] By that name I shall call her, therefore, in recording her symptoms.

As if everything about this old woman were destined to be strange and exceptional, it is remarkable that although Abby Dean is at the head of the Upper Servants' Hall, and occupies the post of housekeeper in Mr. Bull's family, nobody has the least confidence in her, and even Mr. Bull himself has not the slightest idea how she got into the situation. When pressed upon the subject, as I have sometimes taken the liberty of pressing him, he scratches his head, stares, and is unable to give any other explanation than "Well! There she is. That's all *I* know!" On these occasions he is so exceedingly disconcerted and ashamed, that I have forborne to point out to him the absurdity of his taking her without a character, or ever having supposed (as I assume he must have supposed) that such a superannuated person could be worth her wages.

The following extracts from my notes of the case will describe her in her normal condition: "Abby Dean. Phlegmatic temperament. Bilious habit. Circulation, very sluggish. Speech, drowsy, indistinct, and confused. Senses, feeble. Memory, short. Pulse, very languid. A remarkably slow goer. At all times a heavy sleeper, and difficult to awaken. When awakened, peevish. Earlier in life had fits, and was much contorted—first on one side, and then on the other."

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[1] Earl of Aberdeen, and it will be seen that the whole of this paper deals with the affairs of his administration and the members of his ministry.

It was within a few weeks of her inexplicable appearance at the head of Mr. Bull's family, that this ancient female fell into a state of somnambulism. Mr. Bull observed her—I quote his own words—"eternally mooning about the House," and putting some questions to her, and finding that her replies were mere gibberish, sent for me. I found her on a bench in the Upper Servants' Hall, evidently fast asleep (though her eyelids were open), and breathing stertorously. After shaking her for some time with Mr. Bull's assistance, I inquired, "Do you know who you are?" She replied, "Lord! Abby Dean, to be sure!" I said, "Do you know where you are?" She answered, with a sort of fretful defiance, "At the head of Mr. Bull's establishment." I put the question, "Do you know what you have to do there?" Her reply was, "Yes—nothing." Mr. Bull then interposed, and informed me, with some heat, that this was the utmost satisfaction he had been able to elicit "from the confounded old woman," since she first brought her boxes into the family mansion.

She was smartly blistered, daily, for a considerable time. Mustard poultices were freely applied; caustic was used as a counter-irritant; setons were inserted in her neck; and she was trotted about, and poked, and pinched, almost unremittingly, by certain servants very zealous in their attachment to Mr. Bull. I regret to state that under this treatment, sharply continued at intervals from that period to the present, she has become worse instead of better. She has now subsided into a state of constant and confirmed somnambulism, from which there is no human hope of her recovery.

The case, being one of a comatose nature, is chiefly interesting for its obstinacy. Its phenomena are not generally attractive to the imagination. Indeed, I am of opinion that at no period of her invalided career has any moment of brilliancy irradiated the lethargic state of this unfortunate female. Her proceedings are in accordance with those of most of the dreariest somnambulists of whom we have a reliable record. She will get up and dress herself, and go to Mr. Bull's Treasury, or take her seat on her usual Bench in the Upper Servants' Hall, avoiding on the way the knocking of her head against walls and doors, but giving no other sign of intellectual vigour. She will sometimes sit up very late at night, moaning and muttering, and occasionally rising on her legs to complain of being attacked by enemies. (The common delusion that people are conspiring against her, is, as might naturally be expected, a feature of her disease.) She will frequently cram into her pockets a large accumulation of Mr. Bull's bills, plans for the improvement of his estate, and other documents of importance, and will drop the same without any reason, and refuse to take them up again when they are offered to her. Other similar papers she will hide in holes and corners, quickly forgetting what she has done with them. Sometimes, she will fall to wringing her hands in the course of her wanderings in the House, and to declaring that unless she is treated with greater deference she will "go out." But, it is a curious illustration of the cunning often mingled with this disorder that she has never stirred an inch beyond the door; having, evidently, some latent consciousness in the midst of her stupor, that if she once went out, no earthly consideration would prevail on Mr. Bull to let her in again.

Her eyes are invariably open in the sleep-waking state, but their power of vision is much contracted. It has long been evident to all observers of her melancholy case, that she is blind to what most people can easily see.

The circumstance which I consider special to the case of Abby Dean, and greatly augmentive of its alarming character, I now proceed to mention. Mr. Bull has in his possession a Cabinet, of modern manufacture and curious workmanship, composed of various pieces of various woods, inlaid and dovetailed with tolerable ingenuity considering their great differences of grain and growth; but, it must be admitted, clumsily put together on the whole, and liable, at any time, to fall to pieces. It contains, however, some excellent specimens of English timber, that have, in previous pieces of furniture, been highly serviceable to Mr. Bull: among which may be mentioned a small though tough and sound specimen of genuine pollard oak, which Mr. Bull is accustomed to point out to his friends by the playful name of "Johnny."[1] This Cabinet has never been altogether pleasing to Mr. Bull; but when it was sent home by the manufacturer, he consented to make use of it in default of a better. With a little grumbling he entrusted his choicest possessions to its safe-keeping, and placed it, in common with the rest of his worldly goods, under the care of Abby Dean. Now, I am not at the present moment prepared with a theory of the means by which this ill-starred female is enabled to exercise a subtle influence on inert matter; but, it is unquestionably a fact, known to many thousands of credible persons who have watched the case, that she has paralysed the whole Cabinet! Miraculous as it may appear, the Cabinet has derived infection from her somnambulistic guardianship. It is covered with dust, full of moth, gone to decay, and all but useless. The hinges are rusty, the locks are stiff, the creaking doors and drawers will neither open nor shut, Mr. Bull can insinuate nothing into it, and can get nothing out of it but office paper and red tape—of which article he is in no need whatever, having a vast supply on hand. Even Johnny is not distinguishable, in the general shrinking and warping of its ill-fitted materials; and I doubt if there ever were such a rickety piece of furniture beheld in the world!

Mr. Bull's distress of mind is so difficult to separate from his housekeeper's somnambulism, that I cannot present anything like a popular account of the old woman's disorder, without frequently naming her unfortunate master. Mr. Bull, then, has fallen into great trouble of late, the growth of which he finds it difficult to separate from his somnambulist. Thus. One Nick,[2] a mortal enemy of Mr. Bull's—and possessing so much family resemblance to his spiritual enemy of the same name, that if that Nick be the father of lies, this Nick is at least the uncle—became extremely overbearing and aggressive, and, among other lawless proceedings, seized a Turkey which was kept in a Crescent in Mr. Bull's neighbourhood. Now, Mr. Bull, sensible that if the plain rules of right and wrong were once overborne, the security of his own possessions was at an end, joined the Crescent in demanding that the Turkey should be restored. Not that he cared particularly about the bird itself, which was quite unfit for Christmas purposes, but, because Nick's principles were of vital importance to his peace. He therefore instructed Abby Dean to represent, with patience, but with the utmost resolution and firmness, that there must be no stealing of Turkeys, or anything else, without punishment; and that if this Nick conducted himself in a felonious way, he (Mr. Bull) would feel constrained to chastise him. What does the old woman in pursuance of these instructions, but begin gabbling in a manner so drowsy, heavy, halting, and feeble, that the more Nick treats with her, the more persuaded he becomes—and naturally too—that Mr. Bull is a coward who has no earnestness in him! Consequently, he sticks to his wicked intents, which there is a great probability he might otherwise have abandoned, and Mr. Bull is obliged to send his beloved children out to fight him.

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[1] Lord John Russell.

[2] The Emperor of Russia.

The family of Mr. Bull is so brave, their nature is so astonishingly firm under difficulties, and they are a race so unsubduable in the might of their valour, that Mr. Bull cannot hear of their great exploits against his enemy, without enthusiastic emotions of pride and pleasure. But, he has a real tenderness for his children's lives in time of war—unhappily he is less sensible of the value of life in time of peace—and the good old man often weeps in private when he thinks of the gallant blood inexpressibly dear to him, that is shed, and is yet to be shed, in this cause. An exasperating part of Abby Dean's somnambulism is, that at this momentous and painful crisis in Mr. Bull's life, she still goes on " mooning about " (I again quote the worthy gentleman's words), in her old heavy way; presenting a contrast to the energy of his children, which is so extremely disagreeable, that Mr. Bull, though not a violent man, is sometimes almost goaded into knocking her on the head.

Another feature in this case—which we find to obtain in other cases of somnambulism in the books—is, that the patient often becomes confused, touching her own identity. She is observed to confound herself with those noble children of Mr. Bull whom I have just mentioned, and to take to herself more or less of the soaring reputation of their deeds. I clearly foresee, on an attentive examination of the latest symptoms, that this delusion will increase, and that within a few months she will be found sleepily insinuating to all the House that she has some real share in the glory those faithful sons have won. I am of opinion also, that this is a part of her disease which she will be capable of mysteriously communicating to the Cabinet, and that we shall find the whole of that lumbering piece of furniture, at about the same time, similarly afflicted.

It is further to be observed, as an incident of this perplexed case of sleep-waking, that the patient has sufficient consciousness to excuse herself from the performance of every duty she undertook to discharge in entering Mr. Bull's service, by one unvarying reference to the fight in which his children are engaged. The House is neglected, the estate is ill managed, the necessities and complaints of the people are unheeded, everything is put off and left undone, for this no-reason. "Whereas," as Mr. Bull observes—and there is no gainsaying it—"if I be unhappily involved in all this trouble at a distance, let me at least do some slight good at home. Let me have some compensating balance, here, for all my domestic loss and sorrow there. If my precious children be slain upon my right hand, let me, for God's sake, the better teach and nurture those now growing up upon my left." But where is the use of saying this, or of saying anything, to a somnambulist? Further still, than this.—Abby, in her mooning about (for I again quote the words of Mr. Bull), is frequently overheard to mumble that if anybody touches her, it will be at the peril of Mr. Bull's brave children afar off, who will, in that event, suffer some mysterious damage. Now, although the meanest hind, within or without the House, might know better than to suppose this true or possible, I grieve to relate that it has a powerful effect in preventing efforts to awake her; and that many persons in the establishment who are capable of administering powerful shakes or wholesome wringings of the nose are restrained hereby from offering their salutary aid. I should observe, as the closing feature of the case, that these mumblings are echoed in an ominous tone, by the Cabinet; and I am of opinion, from what I observe, that its echoes will become louder in about January or February next, if it should hang together so long.

This is the patient's state. The question to be resolved is, Can she be awakened? It is highly important that she should be, if Science can devise a way; for, until she can be roused to some sense of her condition in reference to Mr. Bull and his affairs, Mr. Bull can by no humane means rid himself of her. That she should be got into a state to receive warning, I agree with Mr. Bull in deeming of the highest importance. Although I wish him to avoid undue excitement, I never can remonstrate with him when he represents to me (as he does very often) that, in this eventful time what he requires to have at the head of his establishment, is—emphatically, a Man.

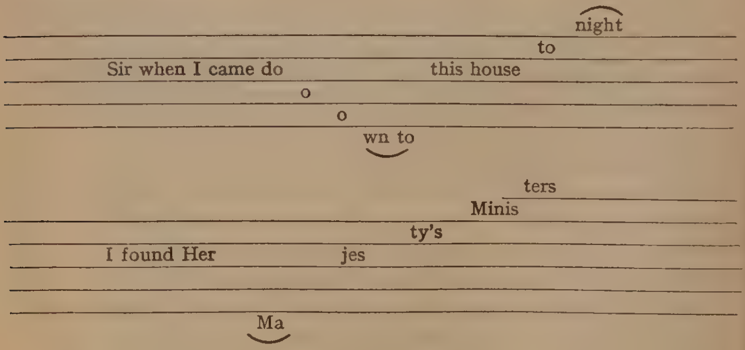
A FEW CONVENTIONALITIES

A CHILD inquired of us, the other day, why a gentleman always said his first prayer in church, in the crown of his hat. We were reduced to the ignominious necessity of replying that we didn't know—but it was the custom.

Having dismissed our young friend with a severe countenance (which we always assume under the like circumstances of discomfiture) we began to ask ourselves a few questions.

Our first list had a Parliamentary reference.

Why must an honourable gentleman always "*come down*" to this house? Why can't he sometimes "come up"—like a horse—or "come in" like a man? What does he mean by invariably coming down? Is it indispensable that he should "come down" to get into the House of Commons—say, for instance, from Saint Albans? Or is that house on a lower level than most other houses? Why is he always "free to confess"? It is well known that Britons never never never will be slaves; then why can't he say what he has to say, without this superfluous assertion of his freedom? Why must an Irish Member always "taunt" the noble Lord with this, that, or the other? Can't he tell him of it civilly, or accuse him of it plainly? *Must* he so ruthlessly taunt him? Why does the Honourable Member for Groginhole call upon the Secretary of State for the Home Department to "lay his hand upon his heart," and proclaim to the country such and such a thing? The Home Secretary is not in the habit of laying his hand upon his heart. When he has anything to proclaim to the country, he generally puts his hands under his coat-tails. Why is he thus personally and solemnly adjured to lay one of them on the left side of his waistcoat for any Honourable Member's gratification? What makes my Honourable friend, the Member for Gammonrife, feel so acutely that he is required to "pin his faith" upon the measures of Her Majesty's Government? Is he always required to attach it in that particular manner only; and are needle and thread, hooks and eyes, buttons, wafers, sealing-wax, paste, bird-lime, gum, and glue, utterly prohibited to him? Who invested the unfortunate Speaker with all the wealth and poverty of the Empire, that he should be told—"Sir, when you look around you, and behold your seas swarming with ships of every variety of tonnage and construction—when you behold your flag waving over the forts of a territory so vast that the Sun never sets upon it—when you consider that your storehouses are teeming with the valuable products of the earth—and when you reflect that millions of your poor are held in the bonds of pauperism and ignorance—can you, I ask, reconcile it to yourself; can you, I demand, justify it to your conscience; can you, I inquire, Sir, stifle the voice within you, by these selfish, these time-serving, these shallow, hollow, mockeries of legislation?" It is really dreadful to have an innocent and worthy gentleman bullied in this manner. Again, why do "I hold in my hand" all sorts of things? Can I never lay them down, or carry them under my arm? There was a Fairy in the *Arabian Nights* who could hold in her hand a pavilion large enough to shelter the Sultan's army, but she could never have held half the petitions, blue books, bills, reports, returns, volumes of Hansard, and other miscellaneous papers, that a very ordinary Member for a very ordinary place will hold in his hands nowadays. Then again, how did it come to be necessary to the Constitution that I should be such a very circuitous and prolix peer as to "take leave to remind you, my Lords, of what fell from the noble and learned lord on the opposite side of your Lordships' house, who preceded my noble and learned friend on the cross Benches when he addressed himself with so much ability to the observations of the Right Reverend Prelate near me, in reference to the measure now brought forward by the Noble Baron"—when, all this time, I mean, and only want to say, Lord Brougham? Is it impossible for my honourable friend the Member for Drowsyshire, to wander through his few dreary sentences immediately before the division, without premising that "at this late hour of the night and in this stage of the debate," etc.? Because if it be not impossible why does he never do it? And why, why, above all, in either house of Parliament must the English language be set to music—bad and conventional beyond any parallel on earth—and delivered, in a manner barely expressible to the eye as follows:



Is Parliament included in the Common Prayer-book under the denomination of "quires and places where they sing"? And if so, wouldn't it be worth a small grant to make some national arrangement for instruction in the art by Mr. Hullah?

Then, consider the theatrical and operatic questions that arise, likewise admitting of no solution whatever.

No man ever knew yet, no man ever will know, why a stage-nobleman is bound to go to execution with a stride and a stop alternately, and cannot proceed to the scaffold on any other terms. It is not within the range of the loftiest intellect to explain why a stage-letter, before it can be read by the recipient, must be smartly rapped back, after being opened, with the knuckles of one hand. It is utterly unknown why choleric old gentlemen always have a trick of carrying their canes behind them, between the waist-buttons of their coat. Several persons are understood to be in Bedlam at the present time, who went distracted in endeavouring to reconcile the bran-new appearance of Mr. Cooper, in *John Bull* bearing a highly polished surgical instrument-case under his arm, with the fact of his having been just fished out of the deep sea, in company with the case in question. Inexplicable phenomena continually arise at the Italian Opera, where we have ourself beheld (it was in the time of Robert of Normandy) Nuns buried in garments of that perplexing nature that the very last thing one could possibly suppose they had taken, was a veil of any order. Who knows how it came about that the young Swiss maiden in the ballet should, as an established custom, revolve, on her nuptial morning, so airily and often, that at length she stands before us, for some seconds, like a beautiful white muslin pen-wiper? Why is her bed-chamber always immediately over the cottage-door? Why is she always awakened by three taps of her lover's hands? Why does her mother always spin? Why is her residence invariably near a bridge? In what Swiss canton do the hardy mountaineers pursue the chamois in silk stockings, pumps, blue breeches, cherry-coloured bows, and their shirt-sleeves? When the Tenor Prince is made more tenor by the near approach of death from steel or poison; when the Bass enemy growls glutted vengeance; and the Heroine (who was so glad in the beginning of her story to see the villagers that she had an irrepressible impulse to be always shaking hands with them) is rushing to and fro among the living and disturbing the wig of the dead: why do we always murmur our Bra—a—avo! or our Bra—a—ava! as the case may be, in exactly the same tone, at exactly the same places, and execute our little audience conventionalities with the punctuality and mechanism of the stage itself? Why does the Primo Buffo always rub his hands and tap his nose? When did mankind enter into articles of agreement that a most uncompromising and uncomfortable box, with the lid at a certain angle, should be called a mossy bank? Who first established an indissoluble connection between the Demon and the brass instruments? When the sailors become Bacchanalian, how do they do it out of such little mugs, replenished from pitchers that have always been turned upside down? Granted that the Count must go a-hunting, why must he therefore wear fur round the tops of his boots, and never follow the chase with any other weapon than a spear with a large round knob at the blunt end?

Then, at public dinners and meetings, why must Mr. Wilson refer to Mr. Jackson as "my honourable friend, if he will permit me to call him so"? Has Wilson any doubt about it? Why does Mr. Smithers say that he is sensible he has already detained you too long, and why *you* say, "No, no; go on!" when you know you are sorry for it directly afterwards? You are not taken by surprise when the Toastmaster cries, in giving the Army and Navy, "Upstanding, gentlemen, *and* good fires"—then what do you laugh for? No man could ever say why he was greatly refreshed and fortified by forms of words, as "Resolved. That this meeting respectfully but firmly views with sorrow and apprehension, not unmixed with abhorrence and dismay"—but they *do* invigorate the patient, in most cases, like a cordial. It is a strange thing that the chairman is obliged to refer to "the present occasion";—that there is a horrible fascination in the phrase which he can't elude. Also, that there should be an unctuous smack and relish in the enunciation of titles, as "And I may be permitted to inform this company that when I had the honour of waiting on His Royal Highness, to ask His Royal Highness to be pleased to bestow his gracious patronage on our excellent Institution, His Royal Highness did me the honour to reply, with that condescension which is ever His Royal Highness's most distinguishing characteristic"—and so forth. As to the singular circumstance that such and such a duty should not have been entrusted to abler hands than mine, everybody is familiar with that phenomenon, but it's very strange that it *must* be so!

Again, in social matters. It is all very well to wonder who invents slang phrases, referential to Mr. Ferguson or any such mythological personage, but the wonder does not stop there. It extends into Belgravia. Saint James's has its slang, and a great deal of it. Nobody knows who first drawled, languidly, that so and so, or such and such a thing, was "good fun," or "capital fun," or "a—the best fun in the world, I'm told"—but some fine gentleman or lady did so, and accordingly a thousand do. They don't know why. We have the same mysterious authority for inquiring, in our faint way, if Cawberry is a nice person—if he is a superior person—for a romance being so charmingly horrible, or a woman so charmingly ugly—for the Hippopotamus being quite charming in his bath, and the little Elephant so charmingly like its mother—for the glass palace being (do you know) so charming to me that I absolutely bore every creature with it—for those horrid sparrows not having built in the dear gutters, which are so charmingly ingenious—for a great deal more, to the same very charming purpose.

When the old stage-coaches ran, and overturns took place in which all the passengers were killed or crippled, why was it invariably understood that no blame whatever was attributable to the coachman? In railway accidents of the present day, why is the coroner always convinced that a searching inquiry must be made, and that the railway authorities are affording every possible facility in aid of the elucidation of this unhappy disaster? When a new building tumbles into a heap of ruins, why are architect, contractor, and materials always the best that could be got for money, with additional precautions—as if that splendid termination were the triumph of construction, and all buildings that don't tumble down were failures? When a boiler bursts, why was it the very best of boilers; and why, when somebody thinks that if the accident were not the boiler's fault it is likely to have been the engineer's, is the engineer then morally certain to have been the steadiest and skilfullest of men? If a public servant be impeached, how does it happen that there never was such an excellent public servant as he will be shown to be by Red-Tape-osophy? If an abuse be brought to light, how does it come to pass that it is sure to be, in fact (if rightly viewed), a blessing? How can it be, that we have gone on, for so many years, surrounding the grave with ghastly, ruinous, incongruous and inexplicable mummeries, and curtaining the cradle with a thousand ridiculous and prejudicial customs?

All these things are conventionalities. It would be well for us if there were no more and no worse in common use. But, having run the gauntlet of so many, in a breath, we must yield to the unconventional necessity of taking breath, and stop here.

A NARRATIVE OF EXTRAORDINARY SUFFERING

A GENTLEMAN of credit and of average ability, whose name we have permission to publish—Mr. Lost, of the Maze, Ware—was recently desirous to make a certain journey in England. Previous to entering on this excursion, which we believe had a commercial object (though Mr. Lost has for some years retired from business as a Woolstapler, having been succeeded in 1831 by his son who now carries on the firm of Lost and Lost, in the old-established premises at Stratford on Avon, Warwickshire, where it may be interesting to our readers to know that he married, in 1834, a Miss Shakespeare, supposed to be a lineal descendant of the immortal bard), it was necessary that Mr. Lost should come to London, to adjust some unsettled accounts with a merchant in the Borough, arising out of a transaction in Hops. His Diary originating on the day previous to his leaving home is before us, and we shall present its rather voluminous information to our readers in a condensed form: endeavouring to extract its essence only.

It would appear that Mrs. Lost had a decided objection to her husband's undertaking the journey in question. She observed, "that he had much better stay at home, and not go and make a fool of himself"—which she seems to have had a strong presentiment that he would ultimately do. A young person in their employ as confidential domestic, also protested against his intention, remarking "that Master warn't the man as was fit for Railways, and Railways warn't the spearses as was fit for Master." Mr. Lost, however, adhering to his purpose, in spite of these dissuasions, Mrs. Lost made no effort (as she might easily have done with perfect success) to restrain him by force. But, she stipulated with Mr. Lost, that he should purchase an Assurance Ticket of the Railway Passengers' Assurance Company, entitling his representatives to three thousand pounds in case of the worst. It was also understood that in the event of his failing to write home by any single night's post, he would be advertised in the *Times*, at full length, next day.

These satisfactory preliminaries concluded, Mr. Lost sent out the confidential domestic (Mary Anne Mag by name, and born of poor but honest parents) to purchase a Railway Guide. This document was the first shock in connection with his extraordinary journey which Mr. Lost and family received. For, on referring to the Index, to ascertain how Ware stood in reference to the Railways of the

United Kingdom and the Principality of Wales they encountered the following mysterious characters:—

WARE TU 6

No farther information could be obtained. They thought of page six, but there was no such page in the book, which had the sportive eccentricity of beginning at page eight. In desperate remembrance of the dark monosyllable TU, they turned to the "classification of Railways," but found nothing there under the letter T except "Taff Vale and Aberdare"—and who (as the confidential domestic said) could ever want *them*! Mr. Lost has placed it on record that his "brain reeled" when he glanced down the page, and found himself, in search of Ware, wandering among such names as Ravenglass, Bootle, and Sprouston.

Reduced to the necessity of proceeding to London by turnpike-road, Mr. Lost made the best of his way to the metropolis in his own one-horse chaise, which he then dismissed in charge of his man, George Flay, who had accompanied him for that purpose. Proceeding to Southwark, he had the satisfaction of finding that the total of his loss upon the Hop transaction did not exceed three hundred and forty-seven pounds, four shillings, and twopence halfpenny. This, he justly regarded as, on the whole, a success for an amateur in that promising branch of speculation; in commemoration of his good fortune, he gave a plain but substantial dinner to the Hop Merchant and two friends at Tom's Coffee House on Ludgate Hill.

He did not sleep at that house of entertainment, but repaired in a hackney cab (No. 482) to the Euston Hotel, adjoining the terminus of the North-Western Railway. On the following morning his remarkable adventures may be considered to have commenced.

It appears that with a view to the farther prosecution of his contemplated journey, it was, in the first place, necessary for Mr. Lost to make for the ancient city of Worcester. Knowing that place to be attainable by way of Birmingham, he started by the train at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and proceeded, pleasantly and at an even pace, to Leighton. Here he found, to his great amazement, a powerful black bar drawn across the road, hopelessly impeding his progress!

After some consideration, during which, as he informs us, his "brain reeled" again, Mr. Lost returned to London. Having partaken of some refreshment, and endeavoured to compose his mind with sleep (from which, however, he describes himself to have derived but little comfort, in consequence of being fitfully pursued by the mystic signs WARE TU 6), he awoke unrefreshed, and at five minutes past five in the afternoon once again set forth in quest of Birmingham. But now, he was even less fortunate than in the morning; for, on arriving at Tring, some ten miles short of his former place of stoppage, he suddenly found the dreaded black barrier across the road, and was thus warned by an insane voice, which seemed to have something supernatural in its awful sound. "RUGBY TO LEICESTER, NOTTINGHAM, AND DERBY!"

With the spirit of an Englishman, Mr. Lost absolutely refused to proceed to either of those towns. If such were the meaning of the voice, it fell powerless upon him. Why should he go to Leicester, Nottingham, and Derby; and what right had Rugby to interfere with him at Tring? He again returned to London, and, fearing that his mind was going, took the precaution of being bled.

When he arose on the following morning, it was with a haggard countenance, on which the most indifferent observer might have seen the traces of a corroding anxiety, and where the practised eye might have easily detected what was really wrong within. Even conscience does not sear like mystery. Where now were the glowing cheek, the double chin, the mellow nose, the dancing eye? Fled. And in their place——

In the silent watches of the night, he had formed the resolution of endeavouring to reach the object of his pursuit, by Gloucester, on the Great-Western Railway. Leaving London once more, this time at half an hour after twelve at noon, he proceeded to Swindon Junction. Not without difficulty. For, at Didcot, he again found the black barrier across the road, and was violently conducted to seven places, with none of which he had the least concern—in particular, to one dreadful spot with the savage appellation of Aynho. But, escaping from these hostile towns after undergoing a variety of hardships, he arrived (as has been said) at Swindon Junction.

Here, all hope appeared to desert him. It was evident that the whole country was in a state of barricade, and that the insurgents (whoever they were) had taken their measures but too well. His imprisonment was of the severest kind. Tortures were applied, to induce him to go to Bath, to Bristol, Yatton, Clevedon Junction, Weston-super-Mare Junction, Exeter, Torquay, Plymouth, Falmouth, and the remotest fastnesses of West Cornwall. No chance of Gloucester was held out to him for a moment. Remaining firm, however, and watching his opportunity, he at length escaped—more by the aid of good fortune, he considers, than through his own exertions—and sliding underneath the dreaded barrier, departed by way of Cheltenham for Gloucester.

And now indeed he might have thought that after combating with so many obstacles, and undergoing perils so extreme, his way at length lay clear before him, and a ray of sunshine fell upon his dismal path. The delusive hope, if any such were entertained by the forlorn man, was soon dispelled. It was his horrible fate to depart from Cirencester exactly an hour before he arrived there, and to leave Gloucester ten minutes before he got to it!

It were vain to endeavour to describe the condition to which Mr. Lost was reduced by this overwhelming culmination of his many hardships. It had been no light shock to find his native country in the hands of a nameless foe, cutting off the communication between one town and another, and carrying out a system of barricade, little if at all inferior, in strength and skill, to the fortification of Gibraltar. It had been no light shock to be addressed by maniac voices urging him to fly to various remote parts of the kingdom. But, this tremendous blow, the annihilation of time, the stupendous reversal of the natural sequence and order of things, was too much for his endurance—too much, perhaps for the endurance of humanity. He quailed beneath it, and became insensible.

When consciousness returned, he found himself again on the North-Western line of Railway, listlessly travelling anywhere. He remembers, he says, Four Ashes, Spread Eagle, and Penkridge. They were black, he thinks, and coaly. He had no business there; he didn't care whether he was there or not. He knew where he wanted to go, and he knew he couldn't go where he wanted. He was taken to Manchester, Bangor, Liverpool, Windermere, Dundee and Montrose, Edinburgh and Glasgow. He repeatedly found himself in the Isle of Man; believes he was, several times, all over Wales; knows he was at Kingstown and Dublin, but has only a general idea how he got there. Once, when he thought he was going his own way at last, he was dropped at a North Staffordshire Station called (he thinks in mockery) Mow Cop. As a general rule he observed that whatsoever divergence he made, he came to Edinburgh. But, there were exceptions—as when he was set down on the extreme verge of land at Holyhead, or put aboard a Steamboat, and carried by way of Paris into the heart of France. He thinks the most remarkable journey he was made to take, was from Euston Square into Northamptonshire; so, by the fens of Lincolnshire round to Rugby; thence, through the whole of the North of England and a considerable part of Scotland, to Liverpool; thence, to Douglas in the Isle of Man; and back, by way of Ireland, Wales, Great Yarmouth, and Bishop Stortford, to Windsor Castle. Throughout the whole of these travels, he observed the black-barrier system in active operation, and was always stopped when he least expected it. He invariably travelled against his will, and found a code of cabalistic signs in use all over the country.

Anxiety and disappointment had now produced their natural results. His face was wan, his voice much weakened, his hair scanty and grey, the whole man expressive of fatigue and endurance. It is an affecting instance of the influence of uneasiness and depression on the mind of Mr. Lost, that he now commenced wildly to seek the object of his journey in the strangest directions. Abandoning the Railroads on which he had undergone so much, he began to institute a feverish inquiry for it among a host of boarding-houses and hotels. "Bed, breakfast, boots, and attendance, two and sixpence per day." —"Bed and boots, seven shillings per week."—"Wines and spirits of the choicest quality."—"Night Porter in constant attendance."—"For night arrivals, ring the private door bell."—"Omnibuses to and from all parts of London, every minute."—"Do not confound this house with any other of the same name." Among such addresses to the public, did Mr. Lost now seek for a way to Worcester. As he might have anticipated—as he *did* anticipate in fact, for he was hopeless now—it was not to be found there. His intellect was greatly shaken.

Mr. Lost has left, in his Diary, a record so minute of the gradual deadening of his intelligence and benumbing of his faculties, that he can be followed downward, as it were step by step. Thus, we find that when he had exhausted the boarding-houses and hotels, family, commercial and otherwise (in which he found his intellect much enfeebled by the constant recurrence of the hieroglyphic "1—6—51—W. J. A."), he addressed himself, with the same dismal object, to Messrs. Moses and Son, and to Mr. Medwin, bootmaker to His Royal Highness Prince Albert. After them, even to inanimate things, as the Patent Compendium Portmanteau, the improved Chaff Machines and Corn Crushers, the Norman Razor, the Bank of England Sealing Wax, Schweepe's Soda Water, the Extract of Sarsaparilla, the Registered Paletot, Rowlands' Kalydor, the Cycloidal Parasol, the Cough Lozenges, the universal night-light, the poncho, Allsopp's pale ale, and the patent knife-cleaner. Failing, naturally, in all these appeals, and in a final address to His Grace the Duke of Wellington in the gentlemanly summer garment, and to Mr. Burton of the General Furnishing Ironmongery Warehouse, he sank into a stupor, and abandoned hope.

Mr. Lost is now a ruin. He is at the Euston Square Hotel. When advised to return home he merely shakes his head and mutters "Ware Tu . . 6." No Cabman can be found who will take charge of him on those instructions. He sits continually turning over the leaves of a small, dog's-eared quarto volume with a yellow cover, and babbling in a plaintive voice, "BRADSHAW, BRADSHAW."

A few days since, Mrs. Lost, having been cautiously made acquainted with his condition, arrived at the hotel, accompanied by the confidential domestic. The first words of the heroic woman were:

"John Lost, don't make a spectacle of yourself, don't. Who am I?"

He replied "BRADSHAW."

"John Lost," said Mrs. Lost, "I have no patience with you. Where have you been to?"

Fluttering the leaves of the book, he answered "To BRADSHAW."

"Stuff and nonsense you tiresome man," said Mrs. Lost. "You put me out of patience. What on earth has brought you to this stupid state?"

He feebly answered, "BRADSHAW."

No one knows what he means.

FRAUDS ON THE FAIRIES

We may assume that we are not singular in entertaining a very great tenderness for the fairy literature of our childhood. What enchanted us then, and is captivating a million of young fancies now, has, at the same blessed time of life, enchanted vast hosts of men and women who have done their long day's work, and laid their grey heads down to rest. It would be hard to estimate the amount of gentleness and mercy that has made its way among us through these slight channels. Forbearance, courtesy, consideration for the poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, the love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force—many such good things have been first nourished in the child's heart by this powerful aid. It has greatly helped to keep us, in some sense, ever young, by preserving through our worldly ways one slender track not overgrown with weeds, where we may walk with children, sharing their delights.

In an utilitarian age, of all other times, it is a matter of grave importance that Fairy tales should be respected. Our English red tape is too magnificently red ever to be employed in the tying up of such trifles, but every one who has considered the subject knows full well that a nation without fancy, without some romance, never did, never can, never will, hold a great place under the sun. The theatre, having done its worst to destroy these admirable fictions—and having in a most exemplary manner destroyed itself, its artists, and its audiences, in that perversion of its duty—it becomes doubly important that the little books themselves, nurseries of fancy as they are, should be preserved. To preserve them in their usefulness, they must be as much preserved in their simplicity, and purity, and innocent extravagance, as if they were actual fact. Whosoever alters them to suit his own opinions, whatever they are, is guilty, to our thinking, of an act of presumption, and appropriates to himself what does not belong to him.

We have lately observed, with pain, the intrusion of a Whole Hog of unwieldy dimensions into the fairy flower garden. The rooting of the animal among the roses would in itself have awakened in us nothing but indignation; our pain arises from his being violently driven in by a man of genius, our own beloved friend, Mr. George Cruikshank. That incomparable artist is, of all men, the last who should lay his exquisite hand on fairy text. In his own art he understands it so perfectly, and illustrates it so beautifully, so humorously, so wisely, that he should never lay down his etching needle to "edit" the Ogre, to whom with that little instrument he can render such extraordinary justice. But, to "editing" Ogres, and Hop-o'-my-thumbs, and their families, our dear moralist has in a rash moment taken, as a means of propagating the doctrines of Total Abstinence, Prohibition of the sale of spirituous liquors, Free Trade, and Popular Education. For the introduction of these topics, he has altered the text of a fairy story; and against his right to do any such thing we protest with all our might and main. Of his likewise altering it to advertise that excellent series of plates, "The Bottle," we say nothing more than that we foresee a new and improved edition of Goody Two Shoes, edited by E. Moses and Son; of the Dervish with the box of ointment, edited by Professor Holloway; and of Jack and the Beanstalk, edited by Mary Wedlake, the popular authoress of Do you bruise your oats yet.

Now, it makes not the least differences to our objection whether we agree or disagree with our worthy friend, Mr. Cruikshank, in the opinions he interpolates upon an old fairy story. Whether good or bad in themselves, they are, in that relation, like the famous definition of a weed; a thing growing up in a wrong place. He has no greater moral justification in altering the harmless little books than we should have in altering his best etchings. If such a precedent were followed we must soon become disgusted with the old stories into which modern personages so obtruded themselves, and the stories themselves must soon be lost. With seven Blue Beards in the field, each coming at a gallop from his own platform mounted on a foaming hobby, a generation or two hence would not know which was which, and the great original Blue Beard would be confounded with the counterfeits. Imagine a Total abstinence edition of *Robinson Crusoe*, with the rum left out. Imagine a Peace edition, with the gunpowder left out, and the rum left in. Imagine a Vegetarian edition, with the goat's flesh left out. Imagine a Kentucky edition, to introduce a flogging of that 'tarnal old nigger Friday, twice a week. Imagine an Aborigines Protection Society edition, to deny the cannibalism and make Robinson embrace the amiable savages whenever they landed. Robinson Crusoe would be "edited" out of his island in a hundred years, and the island would be swallowed up in the editorial ocean.

Among the other learned professions we have now the Platform profession, chiefly exercised by a new and meritorious class of commercial travellers who go about to take the sense of meetings on various articles: some, of a very superior description: some, not quite so good. Let us write the story of Cinderella, "edited" by one of these gentlemen, doing a good stroke of business, and having a rather extensive mission.

ONCE upon a time, a rich man and his wife were the parents of a lovely daughter. She was a beautiful child, and became, at her own desire, a member of the Juvenile Bands of Hope when she was only four years of age. When this child was only nine years of age her mother died, and all the Juvenile Bands of Hope in her district—the Central district, number five hundred and twenty-seven—formed in a procession of two and two, amounting to fifteen hundred, and followed her to the grave, singing chorus Number forty-two, "O come," etc. This grave was outside the town, and under the direction of the Local Board of Health, which reported at certain stated intervals to the General Board of Health, Whitehall.

The motherless little girl was very sorrowful for the loss of her mother, and so was her father too, at first; but, after a year was over, he married again—a very cross widow lady, with two proud tyrannical daughters as cross as herself. He was aware that he could have made his marriage with this lady a civil process by simply making a declaration before a Registrar; but he was averse to this course on religious grounds, and, being a member of the Montgolfian persuasion, was married according to the ceremonies of that respectable church by the Reverend Jared Jocks, who improved the occasion.

He did not live long with his disagreeable wife. Having been shamefully accustomed to shave with warm water instead of cold, which he ought to have used (see Medical Appendix B. and C.), his undermined constitution could not bear up against her temper, and he soon died. Then, this orphan was cruelly treated by her stepmother and the two daughters, and was forced to do the dirtiest of the kitchen work; to scour the saucepans, wash the dishes, and light the fires—which did not consume their own smoke, but emitted a dark vapour prejudicial to the bronchial tubes. The only warm place in the house where she was free from ill-treatment was the kitchen chimney-corner; and as she used to sit down there, among the cinders, when her work was done, the proud fine sisters gave her the name of Cinderella.

About this time, the King of the land, who never made war against anybody, and allowed everybody to make was against him—which was the reason why his subjects were the greatest manufacturers on earth, and always lived in security and peace—gave a great feast, which was to last two days. This splendid banquet was to consist entirely of artichokes and gruel; and from among those who were invited to it, and to hear the delightful speeches after dinner, the King's son was to choose a bride for himself. The proud fine sisters were invited, but nobody knew anything about poor Cinderella, and she was to stay at home.

She was so sweet-tempered, however, that she assisted the haughty creatures to dress, and bestowed her admirable taste upon them as freely as if they had been kind to her. Neither did she laugh when they broke seventeen stay-laces in dressing; for, although she wore no stays herself, being sufficiently acquainted with the anatomy of the human figure to be aware of the destructive effects of tight-lacing, she always reserved her opinions on that subject for the Regenerative Record (price three halfpence in a neat wrapper), which all good people take in, and to which she was a Contributor.

At length the wished-for moment arrived, and the proud fine sisters swept away to the feast and speeches, leaving Cinderella in the chimney-corner. But, she could always occupy her mind with the general question of the Ocean Penny Postage, and she had in her pocket an unread Oration on that subject, made by the well-known Orator, Nehemiah Nicks. She was lost in the fervid eloquence of that talented Apostle when she became aware of the presence of one of those female relatives which (it may not be generally known) it is not lawful for a man to marry. I allude to her grandmother.

"Why so solitary, my child?" said the old lady to Cinderella.

"Alas, grandmother," returned the poor girl, "my sisters have gone to the feast and speeches, and here sit I in the ashes, Cinderella!"

"Never," cried the old lady with animation, "shall one of the Band of Hope despair! Run into the garden, my dear, and fetch me an American Pumpkin! American, because in some parts of that independent country, there are prohibitory laws against the sale of alcoholic drinks in any form. Also; because America produced (among many great pumpkins) the glory of her sex, Mrs. Colonel Bloomer. None but an American Pumpkin will do, my child."

Cinderella ran into the garden, and brought the largest American Pumpkin she could find. This virtuously democratic vegetable her grandmother immediately changed into a splendid coach. Then, she sent her for six mice from the mouse-trap, which she changed into prancing horses, free from the obnoxious and oppressive post-horse duty. Then, to the rat-trap in the stable for a rat, which she changed to a state-coachman, not amenable to the iniquitous assessed taxes. Then, to look behind a watering-pot for six lizards, which she changed into six footmen, each with a petition in his hand ready to present to the Prince, signed by fifty thousand persons, in favour of the early closing movement.

"But grandmother," said Cinderella, stopping in the midst of her delight, and looking at her clothes, "how can I go to the palace in these miserable rags?"

"Be not uneasy about that, my dear," returned her grandmother.

Upon which the old lady touched her with her wand, her rags disappeared, and she was beautifully dressed. Not in the present costume of the female sex, which has been proved to be at once grossly immodest and absurdly inconvenient, but in rich sky-blue satin pantaloons gathered at the ankle, a puce-coloured satin pelisse sprinkled with silver flowers, and a very broad Leghorn hat. The hat was chastely ornamented with a rainbow-coloured ribbon hanging in two bell-pulls down the back; the pantaloons were ormamented with a golden stripe; and the effect of the whole was unspeakably sensible, feminine, and retiring. Lastly, the old lady put on Cinderella's feet a pair of shoes made of glass: observing that but for the abolition of the duty on that article, it never could have been devoted to such a purpose; the effect of all such taxes being to cramp invention, and embarrass the producer, to the manifest injury of the consumer. When the old lady had made these wise remarks, she dismissed Cinderella to the feast and speeches, charging her by no means to remain after twelve o'clock at night.

The arrival of Cinderella at the Monster Gathering produced a great excitement. As a delegate from the United States had just moved that the King do take the chair, and as the motion had been seconded and carried unanimously, the King himself could not go forth to receive her. But His Royal Highness the Prince (who was to move the second resolution), went to the door to hand her from her carriage. This virtuous Prince, being completely covered from head to foot with Total Abstinence Medals, shone as if he were attired in complete armour; while the inspiring strains of the Peace Brass Band in the gallery (composed of the Lambkin Family, eighteen in number, who cannot be too much encouraged) awakened additional enthusiasm.

The King's son handed Cinderella to one of the reserved seats for pink tickets, on the platform, and fell in love with her immediately. His appetite deserted him; he scarcely tasted his artichokes, and merely trifled with his gruel. When the speeches began, and Cinderella, wrapped in the eloquence of the two inspired delegates who occupied the entire evening in speaking to the first Resolution, occasionally cried, "Hear, hear!" the sweetness of her voice completed her conquest of the Prince's heart. But, indeed the whole male portion of the assembly loved her—and doubtless would have done so, even if she had been less beautiful, in consequence of the contrast which her dress presented to the bold and ridiculous garments of the other ladies.

At a quarter before twelve the second inspired delegate having drunk all the water in the decanter, and fainted away, the King put the question, "That this meeting do now adjourn until to-morrow." Those who were of that opinion holding up their hands, and then those who were of the contrary, theirs, there appeared an immense majority in favour of the resolution, which was consequently carried. Cinderella got home in safety, and heard nothing all that night, or all next day, but the praises of the unknown lady with the sky-blue satin pantaloons.

When the time for the feast and speeches came round again, the cross stepmother and the proud fine daughters went out in good time to secure their places. As soon as they were gone, Cinderella's grandmother returned and changed her as before. Amid a blast of welcome from the Lambkin family, she was again handed to the pink seat on the platform by His Royal Highness.

This gifted Prince was a powerful speaker, and had the evening before him. He rose at precisely ten minutes before eight, and was greeted with tumultuous cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. When the excitement had in some degree subsided, he proceeded to address the meeting: who were never tired of listening to speeches, as no good people ever are. He held them enthralled for four hours and a quarter. Cinderella forgot the time, and hurried away so when she heard the first stroke of twelve, that her beautiful dress changed back to her old rags at the door, and she left one of her glass shoes behind. The Prince took it up, and vowed—that is, made a declaration before a magistrate; for he objected on principle to the multiplying of oaths—that he would only marry the charming creature to whom that shoe belonged.

He accordingly caused an advertisement to that effect to be inserted in all the newspapers; for, the advertisement duty, an impost most unjust in principle and most unfair in operation, did not exist in that country; neither was the stamp on newspapers known in that land—which had as many newspapers as the United States, and got as much good out of them. Innumerable ladies answered the advertisement and pretended that the shoe was theirs; but, every one of them was unable to get her foot into it. The proud fine sisters answered it, and tried their feet with no greater success. Then, Cinderella, who had answered it too, came forward amidst their scornful jeers, and the shoe slipped on in a moment. It is a remarkable tribute to the improved and sensible fashion of the dress her grandmother had given her, that if she had not worn it the Prince would probably never have seen her feet.

The marriage was solemnised with great rejoicing. When the honeymoon was over, the King retired from public life, and was succeeded by the Prince. Cinderella, being now a queen, applied herself to the government of the country on enlightened, liberal, and free principles. All the people who ate anything she did not eat, or who drank anything she did not drink, were imprisoned for life. All the newspaper offices from which any doctrine proceeded that was not her doctrine, were burnt down. All the public speakers proved to demonstration that if there were any individual on the face of the earth who differed from them in anything, that individual was a designing ruffian and an abandoned monster. She also threw open the right of voting, and of being elected to public offices, and of making the laws, to the whole of her sex; who thus came to be always gloriously occupied with public life and whom nobody dared to love. And they all lived happily ever afterwards.

Frauds on the Fairies once permitted, we see little reason why they may not come to this, and great reason why they may. The Vicar of Wakefield was wisest when he was tired of being always wise. The world is too much with us, early and late. Leave this precious old escape from it, alone.

A NIGHTLY SCENE IN LONDON

On the fifth of last November, I, the Conductor of this journal, accompanied by a friend well-known to the public, accidentally strayed into Whitechapel. It was a miserable evening; very dark, very muddy, and raining hard.

There are many woful sights in that part of London, and it has been well-known to me in most of its aspects for many years. We had forgotten the mud and rain in slowly walking along and looking about us, when we found ourselves, at eight o'clock, before the Workhouse.

Crouched against the wall of the Workhouse, in the dark street, on the muddy pavement-stones, with the rain raining upon them, were five bundles of rags. They were motionless, and had no resemblance to the human form. Five great beehives, covered with rags—five dead bodies taken out of graves, tied neck and heels, and covered with rags—would have looked like those five bundles upon which the rain rained down in the public street.

"What is this!" said my companion. "What *is* this!"

"Some miserable people shut out of the Casual Ward, I think," said I.

We had stopped before the five ragged mounds, and were quite rooted to the spot by their horrible appearance. Five awful Sphinxes by the wayside, crying to every passer-by, "Stop and guess! What is to be the end of a state of society that leaves us here!"

As we stood looking at them, a decent working-man, having the appearance of a stone-mason, touched me on the shoulder.

"This is an awful sight, sir," said he, "in a Christian country!"

"God knows it is, my friend," said I.

"I have often seen it much worse than this, as I have been going home from my work. I have counted fifteen, twenty, five-and-twenty, many a time. It's a shocking thing to see."

"A shocking thing, indeed," said I and my companion together. The man lingered near us a little while, wished us good-night, and went on.

We should have felt it brutal in us who had a better chance of being heard than the working-man, to leave the thing as it was, so we knocked at the Workhouse Gate. I undertook to be spokesman. The moment the gate was opened by an old pauper, I went in, followed close by my companion. I lost no time in passing the old porter, for I saw in his watery eye a disposition to shut us out.

"Be so good as to give that card to the master of the Workhouse, and say I shall be glad to speak to him for a moment."

We were in a kind of covered gateway, and the old porter went across it with the card. Before he had got to a door on our left, a man in a cloak and hat bounced out of it very sharply, as if he were in the nightly habit of being bullied and of returning the compliment.

"Now, gentlemen," said he in a loud voice, "what do you want here?"

"First," said I, "will you do me the favour to look at that card in your hand. Perhaps you may know my name."

"Yes," says he, looking at it. "I know this name."

"Good. I only want to ask you a plain question in a civil manner, and there is not the least occasion for either of us to be angry. It would be very foolish in me to blame you, and I don't blame you. I may find fault with the system you administer, but pray understand that I know you are here to do a duty pointed out to you, and that I have no doubt you do it. Now, I hope you won't object to tell me what I want to know."

"No," said he, quite mollified, and very reasonable, "not at all. What is it?"

"Do you know that there are five wretched creatures outside?"

"I haven't seen them, but I dare say there are."

"Do you doubt that there are?"

"No, not at all. There might be many more."

"Are they men? Or women?"

"Women, I suppose. Very likely one or two of them were there last night, and the night before last."

"There all night, do you mean?"

"Very likely."

My companion and I looked at one another, and the master of the Workhouse added quickly, "Why, Lord bless my soul, what am I to do? What can I do? The place is full. The place is always full—every night. I must give the preference to women with children, mustn't I? You wouldn't have me not do that?"

"Surely not," said I. "It is a very humane principle, and quite right; and I am glad to hear of it. Don't forget that I don't blame *you*."

"Well!" said he. And subdued himself again.

"What I want to ask you," I went on, "is whether you know anything against those five miserable beings outside?"

"Don't know anything about them," said he, with a wave of his arm.

"I ask, for this reason: that we mean to give them a trifle to get a lodging—if they are not shelterless because they are thieves for instance.—You don't know them to be thieves?"

"I don't know anything about them," he repeated emphatically.

"That is to say, they are shut out, solely because the Ward is full?"

"Because the Ward is full."

"And if they got in, they would only have a roof for the night and a bit of bread in the morning, I suppose?"

"That's all. You'll use your own discretion about what you give them. Only understand that I don't know anything about them beyond what I have told you."

"Just so. I wanted to know no more. You have answered my question civilly and readily, and I am much obliged to you. I have nothing to say against you, but quite the contrary. Good-night!"

"Good-night, gentlemen!" And out we came again.

We went to the ragged bundle nearest to the Workhouse-door, and I touched it. No movement replying, I gently shook it. The rags began to be slowly stirred within, and by little and little a head was unshrouded. The head of a young woman of three or four and twenty, as I should judge; gaunt with want, and foul with dirt; but not naturally ugly.

"Tell us," said I, stooping down. "Why are you lying here?"

"Because I can't get into the Workhouse."

She spoke in a faint dull way, and had no curiosity or interest left. She looked dreamily at the black sky and the falling rain, but never looked at me or my companion.

"Were you here last night?"

"Yes. All last night. And the night afore too."

"Do you know any of these others?"

"I know her next but one. She was here last night, and she told me she come out of Essex. I don't know no more of her."

"You were here all last night, but you have not been here all day?"

"No. Not all day."

"Where have you been all day?"

"About the streets."

"What have you had to eat?"

"Nothing."

"Come!" said I. "Think a little. You are tired and have been asleep, and don't quite consider what you are saying to us. You have had something to eat to-day. Come! Think of it!"

"No I haven't. Nothing but such bits as I could pick up about the market. *Why, look at me!*"

She bared her neck, and I covered it up again.

"If you had a shilling to get some supper and a lodging, should you know where to get it?"

"Yes. I could do that."

"For God's sake get it then!"

I put the money into her hand, and she feebly rose up and went away. She never thanked me, never looked at me—melted away into the miserable night, in the strangest manner I ever saw. I have seen many strange things, but not one that has left a deeper impression on my memory than the dull impassive way in which that worn-out heap of misery took that piece of money, and was lost.

One by one I spoke to all the five. In every one, interest and curiosity were as extinct as in the first. They were all dull and languid. No one made any sort of profession or complaint; no one cared to look at me; no one thanked me. When I came to the third, I suppose she saw that my companion and I glanced, with a new horror upon us, at the last two, who had dropped against each other in their sleep, and were lying like broken images. She said, she believed they were young sisters. These were the only words that were originated among the five.

And now let me close this terrible account with a redeeming and beautiful trait of the poorest of the poor. When we came out of the Workhouse, we had gone across the road to a public house, finding ourselves without silver, to get change for a sovereign. I held the money in my hand while I was speaking to the five apparitions. Our being so engaged, attracted the attention of many people of the very poor sort usual to that place; as we leaned over the mounds of rags, they eagerly leaned over us to see and hear; what I had in my hand, and what I said, and what I did, must have been plain to nearly all the concourse. When the last of the five had got up and faded away, the spectators opened to let us pass; and not one of them, by word, or look, or gesture, begged of us. Many of the observant faces were quick enough to know that it would have been a relief to us to have got rid of the rest of the money with any hope of doing good with it. But, there was a feeling among them all, that their necessities were not to be placed by the side of such a spectacle; and they opened a way for us in profound silence, and let us go.

My companion wrote to me, next day, that the five ragged bundles had been upon his bed all night. I debated how to add our testimony to that of many other persons who from time to time are impelled to write to the newspapers, by having come upon some shameful and shocking sight of this description. I resolved to write in these pages an exact account of what we had seen, but to wait until after Christmas, in order that there might be no heat or haste. I know that the unreasonable disciples of a reasonable school, demented disciples who push arithmetic and political economy beyond all bounds of sense (not to speak of such a weakness as humanity), and hold them to be all-sufficient for every case, can easily prove that such things ought to be, and that no man has any business to mind them. Without disparaging those indispensable sciences in their sanity, I utterly renounce and abominate them in their insanity; and I address people with a respect for the spirit of the New Testament, who do mind such things, and who think them infamous in our streets.

RAILWAY DREAMING

WHEN was I last in France all the winter, deducting the many hours I passed upon the wet and windy way between France and England? In what autumn and spring was it that those Champs Elysées trees were yellow and scant of leaf when I first looked at them out of my balcony, and were a bright and tender green when I last looked at them on a beautiful May morning?

I can't make out. I am never sure of time or place upon a Railroad. I can't read, I can't think, I can't sleep—I can only dream. Rattling along in this railway carriage in a state of luxurious confusion, I take it for granted I am coming from somewhere, and going somewhere else. I seek to know no more. Why things come into my head and fly out again, whence they come and why they come, where they go and why they go, I am incapable of considering. It may be the guard's business, or the railway company's; I only know it is not mine. I know nothing about myself—for anything I know, I may be coming from the Moon.

If I am coming from the Moon, what an extraordinary people the Mooninians must be for sitting down in the open air! I have seen them wipe the hoar-frost off the seats in the public ways, on the faintest appearance of a gleam of sun, and sit down to enjoy themselves. I have seen them, two minutes after it has left off raining for the first time in eight-and-forty hours, take chairs in the midst of the mud and water, and begin to chat. I have seen them by the roadside, easily reclining on iron couches, when their beards have been all but blown off their chins by the east wind. I have seen them, with no protection from the black drizzle and dirt but a saturated canvas blind overhead, and a handful of sand underfoot, smoke and drink new beer, whole evenings. And the Mooninian babies. Heavens, what a surprising race are the Mooninian babies! Seventy-one of these innocents have I counted, with their nurses and chairs, spending the day outside the Café de la Lune, in weather that would have satisfied Herod. Thirty-nine have I beheld in that locality at once, with these eyes, partaking of their natural refreshment under umbrellas. Twenty-three have I seen engaged with skipping-ropes, in mire three inches thick. At three years old the Mooninian babies grow up. They are by that time familiar with coffee-houses, and used up as to truffles. They dine at six. Soup, fish, two entrées, a vegetable, a cold dish, or paté-de-foie-gras, a roast, a salad, a sweet, and a preserved peach or so, form (with occasional whets of sardines, radishes, and Lyons sausage) their frugal repast. They breakfast at eleven, on a light beefsteak with Madeira sauce, a kidney steeped in champagne, a trifle of sweetbread, a plate of fried potatoes, and a glass or two of wholesome Bordeaux wine. I have seen a marriageable young female aged five, in a mature bonnet and crinoline, finish off at a public establishment with her amiable parents, on coffee that would consign a child of any other nation to the family undertaker in one experiment. I have dined at a friendly party, sitting next to a Mooninian baby, who ate of nine dishes besides ice and fruit, and, wildly stimulated by sauces, in all leisure moments flourished its spoon about its head in the manner of a pictorial glory.

The Mooninian Exchange was a strange sight in my time. The Mooninians of all ranks and classes were gambling at that period (whenever it was), in the wildest manner—in a manner, which, in its extension to all possible subjects of gambling, and in the prevalence of the frenzy among all grades, has few parallels that I can recall. The steps of the Mooninian Bourse were thronged every day with a vast, hot, mad crowd, so expressive of the desperate game in which the whole City were players, that one stood aghast. In the Mooninian Journals I read, any day, without surprise, how such a Porter had rushed out of such a house and flung himself into the river, "because of losses on the Bourse"; or how such a man had robbed such another, with the intent of acquiring funds for speculation on the Bourse. In the great Mooninian Public Drive, every day, there were crowds of riders on blood-horses, and crowds of riders in dainty carriages red-velvet lined and white-leather harnessed, all of whom had the cards and counters in their pockets; who were all feeding the blood-horses on paper and stabling them on the board; who were leading a grand life at a great rate and with a mighty show; who were all profuse and prosperous while the cards could continue to be shuffled and the deals to go round.

In the same place, I saw, nearly every day, a curious spectacle. One pretty little child at a window, always waving his hand at, and cheering, an array of open carriages escorted by out-riders in green and gold; and no one echoing the child's acclamation. Occasional deference in carriages, occasional curiosity on foot, occasional adulation from foreigners, I noticed in that connection, in that place; but, four great streams of determined indifference I always saw flowing up and down; and I never, in six months, knew a hand or heard a voice to come in real aid of the child.

I am not a lonely man, though I was once a lonely boy; but that was long ago. The Mooninian capital, however, is the place for lonely men to dwell in. I have tried it, and have condemned myself to solitary freedom expressly for the purpose. I sometimes like to pretend to be childless and companionless, and to wonder whether, if I were really so, I should be glad to find somebody to ask me out to dinner, instead of living under a constant terror of weakly making engagements that I don't want to make. Hence, I have been into many Mooninian restaurants as a lonely man. The company have regarded me as an unfortunate person of that description. The paternal character, occupying the next table with two little boys whose legs were difficult of administration in a narrow space, as never being the right legs in the right places, has regarded me, at first, with looks of envy. When the little boys have indecorously inflated themselves out of the seltzer-water bottle, I have seen discomfiture and social shame on that Mooninian's brow. Meanwhile I have sat majestically using my tooth-pick, in silent assertion of my counterfeit superiority. And yet it has been good to see how that family Mooninian has vanquished me in the long-run. I have never got so red in the face over my meat and wine, as he. I have never warmed up into such enjoyment of my meal as he has of his. I have never forgotten the legs of the little boys, whereas from that Mooninian's soul they have quickly walked into oblivion. And when, at last, under the ripening influence of dinner, those boys have both together pulled at that Mooninians' waistcoat (imploring him, as I conceived, to take them to the play-house, next door but one), I have shrunk under the glance he has given me; so emphatically has it said, with the virtuous farmer in the English domestic comedy, "Dang it, Squoire, can'ee doa thic!" (I may explain in a parenthesis that "thic," which the virtuous farmer can do and the squire can't, is to lay his hand upon his heart—a result opposed to my experience in actual life, where the humbugs are always able to lay their hands upon their hearts, and do it far oftener and much better than the virtuous men.)

In my solitary character I have walked forth after eating my dinner and paying my bill—in the Mooninian capital we used to call the bill "the addition"—to take my coffee and cigar at some separate establishment devoted to such enjoyments. And in the customs belonging to these, as in many other easy and gracious customs, the Mooninians are highly deserving of imitation among ourselves. I have never had far to go, unless I have been particularly hard to please; a dozen houses at the utmost. A spring evening is in my mind when I sauntered from my dinner into one of these resorts, haphazard. The thoroughfare in which it stood, was not as wide as the Strand in London, by Somerset House; the houses were no larger and no better than are to be found in that place; the climate (we find ours a convenient scapegoat) had been, for months, quite as cold and wet, and very very often almost as dark, as the climate in the Strand. The place into which I turned, had been there all the winter just as it was then. It was like a Strand-shop, with the front altogether taken away. Within, it was sanded, prettily painted and papered, decorated with mirrors and glass chandeliers for gas; furnished with little round stone tables, crimson stools, and crimson benches. It was made much more tasteful (at the cost of three and fourpence a week) by two elegant baskets of flowers on pedestals. An inner raised-floor, answering to the back shop in the Strand, was partitioned off with glass, for those who might prefer to read the papers and play at dominoes, in an atmosphere free from tobacco-smoke. There, in her neat little tribune, sits the Lady of the Counter, surrounded at her needlework by lump-sugar and little punch-bowls. To whom I touch my hat; she graciously acknowledging the salute. Forth from her side comes a pleasant waiter, scrupulously clean, brisk, attentive, honest: a man to be very obliging to me, but expecting me to be obliging in return, and whom I cannot bully—which is no deprivation to me, as I don't at all want to do it. He brings me, at my request, my cup of coffee and cigar, and, of his own motion, a small decanter of brandy and a liqueur-glass. He gives me a light, and leaves me to my enjoyment. The place from which the shop-front has been taken makes a gay proscenium; as I sit and smoke, the street becomes a stage, with an endless procession of lively actors crossing and re-crossing. Women with children, carts and coaches, men on horseback, soldiers, water-carriers with their pails, family groups, more soldiers, lounging exquisites, more family groups (coming past, flushed, a little too late for the play), stonemasons leaving work on the new buildings and playing tricks with one another as they go along, two lovers, more soldiers, wonderfully neat young women from shops, carrying flat boxes to customers; a seller of cool drink, with the drink in a crimson velvet temple at his back, and a waistcoat of tumblers on; boys, dogs, more soldiers, horse-riders strolling to the Circus in amazing shirts of private life, and yellow kid gloves; family groups; pickers-up of refuse, with baskets at their backs and hooked rods in their hands to fill them with; more neat young women, more soldiers. The gas begins to spring up in the street; and my brisk waiter lighting our gas, enshrines me, like an idol, in a sparkling temple. A family group come in: father and mother and little child. Two short-throated old ladies come in, who will pocket their spare sugar, and out of whom I foresee that the establishment will get as little profit as possible. Workman in his common frock comes in; orders his small bottle of beer, and lights his pipe. We are all amused, sitting seeing the traffic in the street, and the traffic in the street is in its turn amused by seeing us. It is surely better for me, and for the family group, and for the two old ladies, and for the workman, to have thus much of community with the city life of all degrees, than to be getting bilious in hideous black-holes, and turning cross and suspicious in solitary places! I may never say a word to any of these people in my life, nor they to me; but, we are all interchanging enjoyment frankly and openly—not fencing ourselves off and boxing ourselves up. We are forming a habit of mutual consideration and allowance; and this institution of the café (for all my entertainment and pleasure in which, I pay tenpence), is a part of the civilised system that requires the giant to fall into his own place in a crowd, and will not allow him to take the dwarf's; and which renders the commonest person as certain of retaining his or her commonest seat in any public assembly, as the marquis is of holding his stall at the Opera through the evening.

There were many things among the Mooninians that might be changed for the better, and there were many things that they might learn from us. They could teach us, for all that, how to make and keep a Park—which we have been accustomed to think ourselves rather learned in—and how to trim up our ornamental streets, a dozen times a-day, with scrubbing-brushes, and sponges, and soap, and chloride of lime. As to the question of sweetness within doors, I would rather not have put my own residence, even under the perpetual influence of peat charcoal, in competition with the cheapest model lodging-house in England. And one strange sight, which I have contemplated many a time during the last dozen years, I think is not so well arranged in the Mooninian capital as in London, even though our coroners hold their dread courts at the little public-houses —a custom which I am of course prepared to hear is, and which I know beforehand must be, one of the Bulwarks of the British Constitution.

I am thinking of the Mooninian Morgue, where the bodies of all persons discovered dead, with no clue to their identity upon them, are placed to be seen by all who choose to go and look at them. All the world knows this custom, and perhaps all the world knows that the bodies lie on inclined planes within a great glass window, as though Holbein should represent Death, in his grim Dance, keeping a shop, and displaying his goods like a Regent Street or Boulevard linen-draper. But, all the world may not have had the means of remarking perhaps, as I by chance have had from time to time, some of the accidental peculiarities of the place. The keeper seems to be fond of birds. In fair weather, there is always a cage outside his little window, and a something singing within it as such a something sang, thousands of ages ago, before ever a man died on this earth. The spot is sunny in the forenoon, and, there being a little open space there, and a market for fruit and vegetables close at hand, and a way to the Great Cathedral past the door, is a reasonably good spot for mountebanks. Accordingly, I have often found Paillasse there, balancing a knife or a straw upon his nose, with such intentness that he has almost backed himself in at the doorway. The learned owls have elicited great mirth there, within my hearing, and once the performing dog who had a wait in his part, came and peeped in, with a red jacket on, while I was alone in the contemplation of five bodies, one with a bullet through the temple. It happened, on another occasion, that a handsome youth lay in front in the centre of the window, and that a press of people behind me rendered it a difficult and slow process to get out. As I gave place to the man at my right shoulder, he slipped into the position I had occupied, with his attention so concentrated on the dead figure that he seemed unaware of the change of place. I never saw a plainer expression than that upon his features, or one that struck more enduringly into my remembrance. He was an evil-looking fellow of two or three and twenty, and had his left hand at the draggled ends of his cravat, which he had put to his mouth, and his right hand feeling in his breast. His head was a little on one side; his eyes were intently fixed upon the figure. "Now, if I were to give that pretty young fellow, my rival, a stroke with a hatchet on the back of the head, or were to tumble him over into the river by night, he would look pretty much like that, I am thinking!" He could not have said it more plainly;—I have always an idea that he went away and did it.

It is wonderful to see the people at this place. Cheery married women, basket in hand, strolling in, on their way to or from the buying of the day's dinner; children in arms with little pointing fingers; young girls; prowling boys; comrades in working, soldiering, or what not. Ninety-nine times in a hundred, nobody about to cross the threshold, looking in the faces coming out, could form the least idea, from anything in their expression, of the nature of the sight. I have studied them attentively, and have reason for saying so.

But, I never derived so strange a sensation from this dismal establishment as on going in there once, and finding the keeper moving about among the bodies. I never saw any living creature in among them, before or since, and the wonder was that he looked so much more ghastly and intolerable than the dead, stark people. There is a strong light from above, and a general cold, clammy aspect; and I think that with the first start of seeing him must have come the impression that the bodies were all getting up! It was instantaneous; but he looked horribly incongruous there, even after it had departed. All about him was a library of mysterious books that I have often had my eyes on. From pegs and hooks and rods, hang, for a certain time, the clothes of the dead who have been buried without recognition. They mostly have been taken off people who were found in the water, and are swollen (as the people often are) out of shape and likeness. Such awful boots, with turned-up toes, and sand and gravel clinging to them, shall be seen in no other collection of dress; nor, such neckcloths, long and lank, still retaining the form of having been wrung out; nor, such slimy garments with puffed legs and arms; nor such hats and caps that have been battered against pile and bridge; nor, such dreadful rags. Whose work ornaments that decent blouse; who sewed that shirt? And the man who wore it. Did he ever stand at this window wondering, as I do, what sleepers shall be brought to these beds, and whether wonderers as to who should occupy them, have come to be laid down here themselves?

London! Please to get your tickets ready, gentlemen! I must have a coach. And that reminds me, how much better they manage coaches for the public in the capital of the Mooninians! But, it is done by Centralisation! somebody shrieks to me from some vestry's topmost height. Then, my good sir, let us have Centralisation. It is a long word, but I am not at all afraid of long words when they represent efficient things. Circumlocution is a long word, but it represents inefficiency; inefficiency in everything; inefficiency from the state coach to my hackney cab.

RED TAPE

YOUR public functionary who delights in Red Tape—the purpose of whose existence is to tie up public questions, great and small, in an abundance of this official article—to make the neatest possible parcels of them, ticket them, and carefully put them away on a top shelf out of human reach—is the peculiar curse and nuisance of England. Iron, steel, adamant, can make no such drag-chain as Red Tape. An invasion of Red Ants in innumerable millions, would not be half so prejudicial to Great Britain, as its intolerable Red Tape.

Your Red Tapist is everywhere. He is always at hand, with a coil of Red Tape, prepared to make a small official parcel of the largest subject. In the reception-room of a Government Office, he will wind Red Tape round and round the sternest deputation that the country can send to him. In either House of Parliament, he will pull more Red Tape out of his mouth, at a moment's notice, than a conjuror at a Fair. In letters, memoranda, and dispatches, he will spin himself into Red Tape, by the thousand yards. He will bind you up vast colonies, in Red Tape, like cold roast chickens at a rout-supper; and when the most valuable of them break it (a mere question of time), he will be amazed to find that they were too expansive for his favourite commodity. He will put a girdle of Red Tape round the earth, in quicker time than Ariel. He will measure, from Downing Street to the North Pole, or the heart of New Zealand, or the highest summit of the Himalaya Mountains, by inches of Red Tape. He will rig all the ships in the British Navy with it, weave all the colours in the British Army from it, completely equip and fit out the officers and men of both services in it. He bound Nelson and Wellington hand and foot with it—ornamented them, all over, with bunches of it—and sent them forth to do impossibilities. He will stand over the side of the steamship of the state, sounding with Red Tape, for imaginary obstacles; and when the office-seal at the end of his pet line touches a floating weed, will cry majestically, "Back her! Stop her!" He hangs great social efforts, in Red Tape, about the public offices, to terrify like evil-minded reformers, as great highwaymen used to be hanged in chains on Hounslow Heath. He has but one answer to every demonstration of right, or exposition of wrong; and it is, "My good Sir, this is a question of Tape."

He is the most gentlemanly of men. He is mysterious; but not more so than a man who is cognisant of so much Tape ought to be. Butterflies and gadflies who disport themselves, unconscious of the amount of Red Tape required to keep Creation together, may wear their hearts upon their sleeves; but he is another sort of person.

Not that he is wanting in conversation. By no means. Every question mooted, he has to tie up according to form, and put away. Church, state, territory native and foreign, ignorance, poverty, crime, punishment, popes, cardinals, jesuits, taxes, agriculture and commerce, land and sea—all Tape. "Nothing but Tape, Sir, I assure you. Will you allow me to tie this subject up, with a few years, according to the official form? Thank you. Thus, you see. A knot here; the end cut off there; a twist in this place; a loop in that. Nothing can be more complete. Quite compact, you observe. I ticket it, you perceive, and put it on the shelf. It is now disposed of. What is the next article?"

The quantity of Red Tape officially employed in the defence of such an imposition (in more senses than one) as the Window Tax; the array of Red Tapists and the amount of Red Taping employed in its behalf, within the last six or seven years, is something so astounding in itself, and so illustrative of the enormous quantities of Tape devoted to the public confusion, that we take the liberty, at this appropriate time, of disentangling an odd thousand fathoms or so, as a sample of the commodity.

The Window Tax is a tax of that just and equitable description, that it charges a house with twenty windows at the rate of six shillings and twopence farthing a window; and houses with nine times as many windows, to wit a hundred and eighty, at the rate of eightpence a window, *less*. It is a beautiful feature in this tax (and a mighty convenient one for large country-houses) that, after progressing in a gradually ascending scale or charge, from eight windows to seventy-nine, it then begins to descend again, and charges a house with five hundred windows, just a farthing a window more than a house with nine. This has been, for so many years, proved—by Red Tape—to be the perfection of human reason, that we merely remark upon the circumstance, and there leave it, for another ornamental branch of the subject.

Light and air are the first essentials of our being. Among the facts demonstrated by Physical Science, there is not one more indisputable, than that a large amount of Solar Light is necessary to the development of the nervous system. Lettuces, and some other vegetables, may be grown in the dark, at no greater disadvantage than a change in their natural colour; but, the nervous system of Animals must be developed by Light. The higher the Animal, the more stringent and absolute the necessity of a free admission to it of the Sun's bright rays. All human creatures bred in darkness, droop, and become degenerate. Among the diseases distinctly known to be engendered and propagated by the want of Light, and by its necessary concomitant, the want of free Air, those dreadful maladies, Scrofula and Consumption, occupy the foremost place.

At this time of day, and when the labours of Sanitary Reformers and Boards of Health have educated the general mind in the knowledge of such truths, we almost hesitate to recapitulate these simple facts: which are as palpable and certain as the growth of a tree, or the curling of a wave. But, within a few years, it was a main fault of practical Philosophy, to hold too much herself apart from the daily business and concerns of life. Consequently, within a few years, even these truths were imperfectly and narrowly known. Red Tape, as a great institution quite superior to Nature, positively refused to receive them—strangled them, out of hand—labelled them Impositions, and shelved them with great resentment.

This is so incredible, that our readers will naturally inquire, when, where, and how? Thus. In the Spring of 1844, there sat enthroned, in the office of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Downing Street, London, the Incarnation of Red Tape. There waited upon this enshrinement of Red Tape in the body and flesh of man, a Deputation from the Master Carpenters' Society, and another from the Metropolitan Improvement Society: which latter, comprising among its members some distinguished students of Natural Philosophy, took the liberty of representing the before-mentioned fact in connection with Light, as a small result of Infinite Wisdom, eternally established before Tape was. And, forasmuch as the Window Tax excluded light from the dwellings of the poor in large towns, where the poor lived, crowded together in large old houses; by tempting the landlords of those houses to block up windows and save themselves the payment of duty, which they notoriously did—and, forasmuch, as in every room and corner thus made dark and airless, the poor, for want of space, were fain to huddle beds—and, forasmuch, as a large and a most unnatural percentage of them, were, in consequence, scrofulous, and consumptive, and always sliding downwards into Pauperism—the Deputation prayed the Right Honourable Red Tape, M.P., at least so to modify this tax, as to modify that inhuman and expensive wrong. To which, the Right Honourable Red Tape, M.P., made reply, that he didn't believe that the Tax had anything to do with scrofula; "for," said he, "the window-duties don't affect the cottager; and I have seen numerous instances of scrofula in my own neighbourhood, among the families of the agricultural peasantry." Now, this was the perfection of what may be called Red Tapeosophy. For, not to mention the fact, well known to every traveller about England, that the cottages of agricultural labourers, in general, are a perfect model of sanitary arrangement, and are, in particular remarkable for the capacious dimensions of their windows (which are usually of the bay or oriel form: never less than six feet high, commonly fitted with plate glass, and always capable of being opened freely), it is to be carefully noticed that such cottages always contain a superabundance of room, and especially of sleeping-room: also, that nothing can be farther from the custom of a cottager than to let a sleeping-room to a single man, to diminish his rent and to crowd himself and family into one small chamber, where by reason of the dearness of fuel he stops up crevices, and shuts out air. These being things which no English landlord, dead or alive, ever heard of, it is clear—as clear as the agricultural labourer's cottage is light and airy—that the exclusion of light and air can have nothing to do with Scrofula. So, the Right Honourable Red Tape, M.P., gave the lie (politely) to the Deputation, and proved his case against Nature, to the great admiration of the office Messengers!

Well! But, on the same occasion, there was more Red Tape yet, in the background, ready, in nautical phrase, to be paid out. The Deputation, rather pertinaciously dwelling on the murderous effects of a prohibition of ventilation in the thickly-peopled habitations of the poor, the same authority returned, "You *can* ventilate them if you choose. Here is Deputy Red Tape, from the Stamp Office, at my elbow: and he tells you, that perforated plates of zinc, may be placed in the external walls of houses, without becoming liable to duty." Now, the Deputation were very glad to hear this, because they knew it to be a part of the perfect wisdom of the Acts of Parliament establishing the Window Tax, that they required all stopped-up windows to be stopped up with precisely the same substance as that of which the external walls of a house were made; and that, in a variety of cases, where such walls were of stone, or example, and such windows were stopped up with wood, they were held to be chargeable with duty: though they admitted no ray of light through that usually opaque material. Besides which, the Deputation knew, from the Government Returns, that, under the same Acts of Parliament, a little unglazed hole in a wall, made for a cat to creep through, and a little trap in a cellar to shoot coals down, had been solemnly decided to be windows. Therefore, they were so much relieved by this perforated-zinc discovery, that the good and indefatigable Doctor Southwood Smith (who was one of the deputation) was seen, by Private John Towler, of the Second Grenadier Guards, sentry on duty at the Treasury, to fall upon the neck of Mr. Toynbee (who was another of the deputation) and shed tears of joy in Parliament Street.

But, the President of the Carpenters' Society, a man of rule and compasses, whose organ of veneration appears (in respect of Red Tape) to have been imperfectly developed, doubted. And he, writing to the Stamp Office on the point, caused more Red Tape to be spun into this piece of information, "that perforated plates of zinc would be chargeable if so perforated as to afford light, but not if so as to serve the purpose of ventilation only!" It not being within the knowledge of the Carpenters' Society (which was a merely practical body) how to construct perforations of such a peculiar double-barrelled action as at once to let in air and shut out light, the Right Honourable Red Tape, M.P., himself, was referred to for an explanation. This, he gave in the following skein, which has justly been considered the highest specimen of the manufacture. "There has been no mistake, as the parties suppose, in stating that openings for ventilation might be made which would not be chargeable as windows, and I cannot think it at all inconsistent with such a statement to decline expressing, beforehand, a general opinion as to whether certain openings when made would or would not be considered as windows, and as such liable to charge."

To crown all, with a wreath of blushing Tape of the first official quality, it may be briefly mentioned, that no existing Act of Parliament made any such exception, and that it had no existence out of Tape. For, a local act, for Liverpool only, was *afterwards passed*, exempting from the Window Tax circular ventilating apertures, not exceeding seven inches in diameter; provided, that if they were made in a direct line, they should be protected by a grating of cast-iron, the interstices thereof not exceeding one quarter of an inch in width.

One other choice sample of the best Red Tape presents itself in the nefarious history of the Window Tax. In July of the same year, Lord Althorp—whose name is ever to be respected, as having, perhaps, less association with Red Tape than that of any Minister whomsoever—made a short speech in the House of Commons, descriptive of an enactment he then introduced, for allaying something of the indignation which this tax had raised. It was, he said, "a clause, enabling persons to open fresh windows in houses at present existing, without any additional charge. Its only effect is, to prevent an increase of the revenue, in the case of houses already existing." On the faith of this statement, numbers of house-occupiers opened new windows. The instant the clause got into the Government offices, it was immeshed in a very net of Red Tape. The Stamp Office, in its construction of it, substituted existing occupiers, for existing houses; into the clause itself were introduced, before it became law, words, confining this privilege to persons "duly assessed for the year ending 5th April 1835." What followed? Red Tape made the discovery that no one who took advantage of that clause, and opened new windows, WAS duly assessed in 1835—the whole Government Assessment: made, be it remembered, by Government Assessors: having been loosely and carelessly made—and all those openers of new windows, upon the faith of that plain speech of a plain gentleman, were surcharged; to the increase of the revenue, the dishonour of the public character of the country, and the very canonisation of Red Tape.

For the collection and clear statement of these facts, we are indebted to an excellent pamphlet reprinted, at the time, from the *Westminster Review*. The facts and the subject are worthy of one another.

O give your public functionary, who delights in Red Tape, a good social improvement to deal with! Let him come back to his Tape-wits, after being frightened out of them, for a little while, by the ravages of a Plague; and count, if you can, the miles of Red Tape he will pile into barriers, against—a General Interment Bill, say, or a Law for the suppression of infectious and disgusting nuisances! O the cables of Red Tape he will coil away in dispatch boxes, the handcuffs he will make of Red Tape to fetter useful hands; the interminable perspectives of Exchequers, Woods and Forests, and what not, all hung with Red Tape, up and down which he will languidly wander, to the weariness of all whose hard fate it is, to have to pursue him!

But, give him something to play with—give him a park to slice away—a hideous scarecrow to set up in a public place, where it may become the ludicrous horror of the civilised earth—a marble arch to move—and who so brisk as he! He will rig you up a scaffolding with Red Tape, and fall to, joyfully. These are the things in which he finds relief from unlucky Acts of Parliament that are more troublesome improvements than they were meant to be. Across and across them, he can spin his little webs of Red Tape, and catch summer flies; or, near them, litter down official dozing-places, and roll himself over and over in Red Tape, like the Hippopotamus wallowing in his bath.

Once upon a time, there was a dusty dry old shop in Long Acre, London, where, displayed in the windows, in tall slim bottles, were numerous preparations, looking, at first sight, like unhealthy maccaroni. On a nearer inspection these were found to be Tapeworms, extracted from the internal mechanism of certain ladies and gentlemen who were delicately referred to, on the bottles, by initial letters. Doctor Gardner's medicine had effected these wonderful results; but, the Doctor, probably apprehensive that his patients might "blush to find it fame," enshrined them in his museum, under a thin cloud of mystery. We have a lively remembrance of a white basin, which, in the days of our boyhood, remained for eight or ten years, in a conspicuous part of the museum, and was supposed to contain a specimen so recent that there had not yet been time for its more elaborate preservation. It bore, as we remember, the label, "This singular creature, with ears like a mouse, was last week found destroying the inside of Mr. O—in the City Road." But, this was an encroachment on the province of the legitimate Tapeworms. That species were all alike except in length. The smallest, according to the labels, measured, to the best of our recollection, about two hundred yards.

If, in any convenient part of the United Kingdom (we suggest the capital as the centre of resort), a similar museum could be established, for the destruction and exhibition of the Red Tapeworms with which the British public are so sorely afflicted, there can be no doubt that it would be, at once, a vast national benefit, and a curious national spectacle. Nor can there be a doubt that the people in general would cheerfully contribute to the support of such an establishment. The labels might be neatly and legibly written, according to the precedent we have mentioned. "The Right Honourable Mr. X—from the Exchequer. Seven thousand yards." "Earl Y—from the Colonial Office. Half as long again." "Lord Z—from the Woods and Forests. The longest ever known." "This singular creature,"—not mentioning its ears—"was found destroying the patience of Mr. John B— in the House of Commons." If it were practicable to open such an Institution before the departure of All Nations (which can scarcely be hoped) it might be desirable to translate these abstracts into a variety of languages, for the wider understanding of one of our most agreeable and improving sights.

THE FRIEND OF THE LIONS

We are in the Studio of a friend of ours, whose knowledge of all kinds of Beasts and Birds has never been surpassed, and to whose profound acquaintance with the whole Animal Kingdom, every modern picture-gallery and every print-shop, at home and abroad, bears witness. We have been wanted by our friend as a model for a Rat-catcher. We feel much honoured, and are sitting to him in that distinguished capacity, with an awful Bulldog much too near us.

Our friend is, as might be expected, the particular friend of the Lions in the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, London. On behalf of that Royal Family dear to his heart, he offers—standing painting away at his easel, with his own wonderful vigour and ease—a few words of friendly remonstrance to the Zoological Society.

You are an admirable society (says our friend, throwing in, now a bit of our head, and now a bit of the Bulldog's), and you have done wonders. You are a society that has established in England, a national menagerie of the most beautiful description, and that has placed it freely and in a spirit deserving of the highest commendation within the reach of the great body of the people. You are a society rendering a real service and advantage to the public, and always most sensibly and courteously represented by your excellent Mitchell.

Then why (proceeds our friend), don't you treat your Lions better?

In the earnestness of his enquiry, our friend looks harder than usual at the Bulldog. The Bulldog immediately droops and becomes embarrassed. All dogs feel that our friend knows all their secrets, and that it is utterly hopeless to attempt to take him in. The last base action committed by this Bulldog is on his conscience, the moment our friend fixes him. "What? You did, eh?" says our friend to the Bulldog. The Bulldog licks his lips with the greatest nervousness, winks his red eyes, balances himself afresh on his bandy fore-legs, and becomes a spectacle of dejection. He is as little like his vagabond self, as that remarkable breed which the French call a bouledogue.

Your birds (says our friend, resuming his work, and addressing himself again to the Zoological Society), are as happy as the day is—he was about to add, long, but glances at the light and substitutes—short. Their natural habits are perfectly understood, their structure is well-considered, and they have nothing to desire. Pass from your birds to those members of your collection whom Mr. Rogers used to call, "our poor relations." Of course I mean the monkeys. They have an artificial climate carefully prepared for them. They have the blessing of congenial society carefully secured to them. They are among their own tribes and connexions. They have shelves to skip upon, and pigeon-holes to creep into. Graceful ropes dangle from the upper beams of their sitting-rooms, by which they swing, for their own enjoyment, the fascination of the fair sex, and the instruction of the enquiring minds of the rising generation. Pass from our poor relations to that beast, the Hippopotamus—What do you mean?

The last enquiry is addressed, not to the Zoological Society but to the Bulldog, who has deserted his position, and is sneaking away. Passing his brush into the left thumb on which he holds his palette, our friend leisurely walks up to the Bulldog, and slaps his face! Even we, whose faith is great, expect to see him next moment with the Bulldog hanging on to his nose; but, the Bulldog is abjectly polite, and would even wag his tail if it had not been bitten off in his infancy.

Pass, I was saying (coolly pursues our friend at his easel again), from our poor relations to that impersonation of sensuality, the Hippopotamus. How do you provide for him? Could he find, on the banks of the Nile, such a villa as you have built for him on the banks of the Regent's canal? Could he find, in his native Egypt, an appropriately furnished drawing-room, study, bath, wash-house, and spacious pleasure-ground, all *en suite*, and always ready? I think not. Now, I beseech your managing committee and your natural philosophers, to come with me and look at the Lions.

Here, our friend seizes a piece of charcoal and instantly produces, on a new canvas standing on another easel near, a noble Lion and Lioness. The Bulldog (who deferentially resumed his position after having his face slapped), looks on in manifest uneasiness, lest this new proceeding should have something to do with him.

There! says our friend, throwing the charcoal away, there they are! The majestic King and Queen of quadrupeds. The British Lion is no longer a fictitious creature in the British coat of arms. You produce your British Lion every year from this royal couple. And how, with all the vast amount of resources, knowledge, and experience at your command, how do you treat these your great attractions? From day to day, I find the noble creatures patiently wearing out their weary lives in narrow spaces where they have hardly room to turn, and condemned to face in the roughest weather a bitter Nor'-Westerly aspect. Look at those wonderfully-constructed feet, with their exquisite machinery for alighting from springs and leaps. What do you conceive to be the kind of ground to which those feet are, in the great foresight of Nature, least adapted? Bare, smooth, hard boards, perhaps, like the deck of a ship? Yes. A strange reason why you should choose that and no other flooring for their dens!

Why, Heaven preserve us! (cries our friend, frightening the Bulldog very much) do any of you keep a cat? Will any of you do me the favour to watch a cat in a field or garden, on a bright sunshiny day—how she crouches in the mould, rolls in the sand, basks in the grass, delights to vary the surface upon which she rests, and change the form of the substance upon which she takes her ease. Compare such surfaces and substances with the one uniform, unyielding, unnatural, unelastic, inappropriate piece of human carpentry upon which these beautiful animals, with their vexed faces, pace and repace, and pass each other two hundred and fifty times an hour.

It is really incomprehensible (our friend proceeds), in you who should be so well acquainted with animals, to call these boards—or that other uncomfortable boarded object like a Mangle with the inside taken out—a Bed, for creatures with these limbs and these habits. That, a Bed for a Lion and Lioness, which does not even give them a chance of being bruised in a new place. Learn of your cat again, and see how *she* goes to bed. Did you ever find her, or any living creature, go to bed, without re-arranging to the whim and sensation of the moment, the materials of the bed itself? Don't you, the Zoological Society, punch and poke your pillows, and settle into suitable places in your beds? Consider then, what the discomfort of these magnificent brutes must be, to whom you leave no diversity of choice, no power of new arrangement, and as to whose unchanging and unyielding beds you begin with a form and substance that have no parallel in their natural lives. If you doubt the pain they must endure, go to museums and colleges where the bones of lions and other animals of the feline tribe who have lived in captivity under similar circumstances, are preserved; and you will find them thickly encrusted with a granulated substance, the result of long lying upon unnatural and uncomfortable planes.

I will not be so pressing as to the feeding of my Royal Friends (pursues the Master), but even there I think you are wrong. You may rely upon it, that the best regulated families of Lions and Lionesses don't dine every day punctually at the same hour, in their natural state, and don't always keep the same kind and quantity of meat in the larder. However, I will readily waive that question of board, if you will only abandon the other.

The time of the sitting being out, our friend takes his palette from his thumb, lays it aside with his brush, ceases to address the Zoological Society, and releases the Bulldog and myself. Having occasion to look closely at the Bulldog's chest, he turns that model over as if he were made of clay (if I were to touch him with my little finger he would pin me instantly), and examines him without the smallest regard to his personal wishes or convenience. The Bulldog, having humbly submitted, is shown to the door.

"Eleven precisely, to-morrow," says our friend, "or it will be the worse for you." The Bulldog respectfully slouches out. Looking out of the window, I presently see him going across the garden, accompanied by a particularly ill-looking proprietor with a black eye—my prototype I presume—again a ferocious and audacious Bulldog, who will evidently kill some other dog before he gets home.

FROM THE RAVEN IN THE HAPPY FAMILY

I

I WON'T bear it, and I don't see why I should.

Having begun to commit my grievances to writing, I have made up my mind to go on. You men have a saying, "I may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb." Very good, *I* may as well get into a false position with our proprietor for a ream of manuscript as a quire. Here goes!

I want to know who Buffon[1] was. I'll take my oath he wasn't a bird. Then what did *he* know about birds—especially about Ravens? He pretends to know all about Ravens. Who told him? Was his authority a Raven? I should think not. There never was a Raven yet who committed himself, you'll find, if you look into the precedents.

There's a schoolmaster in dusty black knee-breeches and stockings, who comes and stares at our establishment every Saturday, and brings a lot of boys with him. He is always bothering the boys about Buffon. That's the way I know what Buffon says. He is a nice man, Buffon; and you're all nice men together, ain't you?

What do you mean by saying that I am inquisitive and impudent, that I go everywhere, that I affront and drive off the dogs, that I play pranks on the poultry, and that I am particularly assiduous in cultivating the goodwill of the cook? That's what your friend Buffon says, and you adopt him it appears. And what do you mean by calling me "a glutton by nature and a thief by habit?" Why, the identical boy who was being told this, on the strength of Buffon, as he looked through our wires last Saturday, was almost out of his mind with pudding, and had got another boy's top in his pocket!

I tell you what. I like the idea of you men, writing histories of *us*, and settling what we are, and what we are not, and calling us any names you like best. What colours do you think you would show in, yourselves, if some of us were to take it into our heads to write histories of *you*? I know something of Astley's Theatre, I hope; I was about the stables there, a few years. Ecod! if you heard the observations of the Horses after the performance, you'd have some of the conceit taken out of you!

I don't mean to say that I admire the Cat. I *don't* admire her. On the whole, I have a personal animosity towards her. But being obliged to lead this life, I condescend to hold communication with her, and I have asked her what *her* opinion is. She lived with an old lady of property before she came here, who had a number of nephews and nieces. She says she could show you up to that extent, after her experience in that situation, that even you would be hardly brazen enough to talk of cats being sly and selfish any more.

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[1] Comte de G. L. L. Buffon, Naturalist, 1707–1788.

I am particularly assiduous in cultivating the goodwill of the cook, am I? Oh! I suppose you never do anything of this sort, yourselves? No politician among you was ever particularly assiduous in cultivating the goodwill of a minister, eh? No clergyman in cultivating the goodwill of a bishop, humph? No fortune-seeker in cultivating the goodwill of a patron, hah? You have no toad-eating, no time-serving, no place-hunting, no lacqueyship of gold and silver sticks, or anything of that sort, I suppose? You haven't too many cooks, in short, whom you are all assiduously cultivating, till you spoil the general broth? Not you. You leave that to the Ravens.

Your friend Buffon, and some more of you, are mighty ready, it seems, to give *us* characters. Would you like to hear about your own temper and forbearance? Ask the Dog. About your never overloading or ill-using a willing creature? Ask my brother-in-law's friend, the Camel, up in the Zoological. About your gratitude to, and your provision for, old servants? I wish I could refer you to the last horse I dined off (he was very tough), up at a knacker's yard in Battle Bridge. About your mildness, and your abstinence from blows and cudgels? Wait till the Donkey's book comes out!

You are very fond of laughing at the parrot, I observe. Now, I don't care for the parrot. I don't admire the parrot's voice—it wants hoarseness. And I despise the parrot's livery—considering black the only true wear. I would as soon stick my bill into the parrot's breast as look at him. Sooner. But if you come to that, and you laugh at the parrot because the parrot says the same thing over and over again, don't you think you could get up a laugh at yourselves? Did you ever know a Cabinet Minister say of a flagrant job or great abuse, perfectly notorious to the whole country, that he had never heard a word of it himself, but could assure the honourable gentleman that every inquiry should be made? Did you ever hear a Justice remark, of any extreme example of ignorance, that it was a most extraordinary case, and he couldn't have believed in the possibility of such a case—when there had been, all through his life, ten thousand such within sight of his chimney-pots? Did you ever hear, among yourselves, anything approaching to a parrot repetition of the words, Constitution, Country, Public Service, Self-Government, Centralisation, Un-English, Capital, Balance of Power, Vested Interests, Corn, Rights of Labour, Wages, or so forth? *Did* you ever? No! Of course you never!

But to come back to that fellow Buffon. He finds us Ravens to be most extraordinary creatures. We have properties so remarkable, that you'd hardly believe it. "A piece of money, a teaspoon, or a ring," he says, "are always tempting baits to our avarice. These we will slily seize upon; and, if not watched, carry to our favourite hole." How odd!

Did you ever hear of a place called California? *I* have. I understand there are a number of animals over there, from all parts of the world, turning up the ground with their bills, grubbing under the water, sickening, moulting, living in want and fear, starving, dying, tumbling over on their backs, murdering one another, and all for what? Pieces of money that they want to carry to their favourite holes. Ravens every one of 'em! Not a man among 'em, bless you!

Did you ever hear of Railway Scrip? *I* have. We made a pretty exhibition of ourselves about that, we feathered creatures! Lord, how we went on about that Railway Scrip! How we fell down, to a bird, from the Eagle to the Sparrow, before a scarecrow, and worshipped it for the love of the bits of rag and paper fluttering from its dirty pockets! If it hadn't tumbled down in its rottenness, we should have clapped a title on it within ten years, I'll be sworn! —Go along with you, and your Buffon, and don't talk to me!

"The Raven don't confine himself to petty depredations on the pantry or the larder"—here you are with your Buffon again—"but he soars at more magnificent plunder, that he can neither exhibit nor enjoy." This must be very strange to you men—more than it is to the Cat who lived with that old lady, though!

Now, I am not going to stand this. You shall not have it all your own way. I am resolved that I won't have Ravens written about by men, without having men written about by Ravens—at all events by one Raven, and that's me. I shall put down my opinions about you. As leisure and opportunity serve, I shall collect a natural history of you. You are a good deal given to talk about *your* missions. That's my mission. How do you like it?

I am open to contributions from any animal except one of your set; bird, beast, or fish, may assist me in my mission, if he will. I have mentioned it to the Cat, intimated it to the Mouse, and proposed it to the Dog. The Owl shakes his head when I confide it to him, and says he doubts. He always did shake his head and doubt. Whenever he brings himself before the public, he never does anything except shake his head and doubt. I should have thought he had got himself into a sufficient mess by doing that, when he roosted for a long time in the Court of Chancery. But he can't leave off. He's always at it.

Talking of missions, here's our Proprietor's Wife with a mission now! She has found out that she ought to go and vote at elections; ought to be competent to sit in Parliament; ought to be able to enter the learned professions—the army and navy, too, I believe. She has made the discovery that she has no business to be the comfort of our Proprietor's life, and to have the hold upon him of not being mixed up in all the janglings and wranglings of men, but is quite ill-used in being the solace of his home, and wants to go out speechifying. That's our Proprietor's Wife's new mission. Why, you never heard the Dove go on in that ridiculous way. She knows her true strength better.

You are mighty proud about your language; but it seems to me that you don't deserve to have words, if you can't make a better use of 'em. You know you are always fighting about 'em. Do you never mean to leave that off, and come to things a little? I thought you had high authority for *not* tearing each other's eyes out, about words. You respect it, don't you?

I declare I am stunned with words, on my perch in the Happy Family. I used to think the cry of a Peacock bad enough, when I was on sale in a menagerie, but I had rather live in the midst of twenty peacocks, than one Gorham and a Privy Council. In the midst of your wordy squabbling, you don't think of the lookers-on. But if you heard what *I* hear in my public thoroughfare, you'd stop a little of that noise, and leave the great bulk of the people something to believe in peace. You are overdoing it, I assure you.

I don't wonder at the Parrot picking words up and occupying herself with them. She has nothing else to do. There are no destitute parrots, no uneducated parrots, no foreign parrots in a contagious state of distraction, no parrots in danger of pestilence, no festering heaps of miserable parrots, no parrots crying to be sent away beyond the sea for dear life. But among you!—

Well! I repeat, I am not going to stand it. Tame submission to injustice is unworthy of a Raven. I croak the croak of revolt, and call upon the Happy Family to rally round me. You men have had it all your own way for a long time. *Now*, you shall hear a sentiment or two about yourselves.

I find my last communication gone from the corner where I hid it. I rather suspect the magpie, but he says, "Upon his honour." If Mr. Rowland Hill has got it, he will do me justice—more justice than you have done him lately, or I am mistaken in my man.

II

HALLOA!

You *won't* let me begin that Natural History of you, eh? You *will* always be doing something or other, to take off my attention? Now, you have begun to argue with the Undertakers, have you? What next!

Ugh! you are a nice set of fellows to be discussing, at this time of day, whether you shall countenance that humbug any longer. "Performing" funerals, indeed! I have heard of performing dogs and cats, performing goats and monkeys, performing ponies, white-mice, and canary-birds; but performing drunkards at so much a day, guzzling over your dead, and throwing half of you into debt for a twelvemonth, beats all I ever heard of. Ha, ha!

The other day there was a person "went and died" (as our Proprietor's wife says) close to our establishment. Upon my beak I thought I should have fallen off my perch, you made me laugh so, at the funeral!

Oh my crop and feathers, what a scene it was! *I* never saw the owl so charmed. It was just the thing for him.

First of all, two dressed-up fellows came—trying to look sober, but they couldn't do it—and stuck themselves outside the door. There they stood, for hours, with a couple of crutches covered over with drapery; cutting their jokes on the company as they went in, and breathing such strong rum and water into our establishment over the way, that the Guinea-Pig (who has a poor little head) was drunk in ten minutes. You are so proud of your humanity. Ha, ha! As if a pair of respectable crows wouldn't have done it much better?

By and by, there came a hearse and four, and then two carriages and four; and on the tops of 'em, and on all the horses' heads, were plumes of feathers, hired at so much per plume; and everything, horses and all, was covered over with black velvet, till you couldn't see it. Because there were not feathers enough yet, there was a fellow in the procession carrying a board of 'em on his head, like Italian images; and there were about five-and-twenty or thirty other fellows (all hot and red in the face with eating and drinking) dressed up in scarves and hat-bands, and carrying—shut-up fishing-rods, I believe—who went draggling through the mud, in a manner that I thought would be the death of me; while the "Black Jobmaster"—that's what he calls himself—who had let the coaches and horses to a furnishing undertaker, who had let 'em to a haberdasher, who had let 'em to a carpenter, who had let 'em to the parish-clerk, who had let 'em to the sexton, who had let 'em to the plumber painter and glazier who had got the funeral to do, looked out of the public-house window at the corner, with his pipe in his mouth, and said—for I heard him—"That was the sort of turn-out to do a gen-teel party credit." That! As if any two-and-sixpenny masquerade, tumbled into a vat of blacking, wouldn't be quite as solemn, and immeasurably cheaper!

Do you think I don't know you! You're mistaken if you think so. But perhaps you do. Well! Shall I tell you what I know? Can you bear it? Here it is then. The Black Jobmaster is right. The root of all this, is the gen-teel party.

You don't mean to deny it, I hope? You don't mean to tell me that this nonsensical mockery isn't owing to your gentility. Don't I know a Raven in a Cathedral Tower, who has often heard your service for the Dead? Don't I know that you always begin it with the words, "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out"? Don't I know that in a monstrous satire on those words, you carry your hired velvets, and feathers, and scarves, and all the rest of it, to the edge of the grave, and get plundered (and serve you right!) in every article, because you WILL be gen-teel parties to the last?

Eh? Think a little! Here's the plumber painter and glazier come to take the funeral order which he is going to give to the sexton, who is going to give it to the clerk, who is going to give it to the carpenter, who is going to give it to the haberdasher, who is going to give it to the furnishing undertaker, who is going to divide it with the Black

Jobmaster. "Hearse and four, Sir?" says he. "No, a pair will be sufficient." "I beg your pardon, Sir, but when we buried Mr. Grundy at number twenty, there was four on 'em, Sir; I think it right to mention it." "Well, perhaps there had better be four." "Thank you, Sir. Two coaches and four, Sir, shall we say?" "No. Coaches and pair." "You'll excuse my mentioning it, Sir, but pairs to the coaches, and four to the hearse, would have a singular appearance to the neighbours. When we put four to anything, we always carry four right through." "Well! say four!" "Thank you, Sir. Feathers of course?" "No. No feathers. They're absurd." "Very good, Sir. *No* feathers?" "No." "*Very* good, Sir. We *can* do fours without feathers, Sir, but it's what we never do. When we buried Mr. Grundy, there was feathers, and—I only throw it out, Sir—Mrs. Grundy might think it strange." "Very well! Feathers!" "Thank you, Sir,"—and so on.

Is it and so on, or not, through the whole black job of jobs, because of Mrs. Grundy and the gen-teel party?

I suppose you've thought about this? I suppose you've reflected on what you're doing, and what you've done? When you read about those poisonings for the burial society money, you consider how it is that burial societies ever came to be, at all? You perfectly understand—you who are not the poor, and ought to set 'em an example—that, besides making the whole thing costly, you've confused their minds about this burying, and have taught 'em to confound expense and show, with respect and affection. You know all you've got to answer for, you gen-teel parties? I'm glad of it.

I believe it's only the monkeys who are servile imitators, is it? You reflect! To be sure you do. So does Mrs. Grundy—and she casts reflections—don't she?

What animals are those who scratch shallow holes in the ground in crowded places, scarcely hide their dead in 'em, and become unnaturally infected by their dead, and die by thousands? Vultures, I suppose. I think you call the Vulture an obscene bird? I don't consider him agreeable, but I never caught him misconducting himself in that way.

My honourable friend, the dog—I call him my honourable friend in your Parliamentary sense, because I hate him—turns round three times before he goes to sleep. I ask him why? He says he don't know; but he always does it. Do *you* know how you ever came to have that board of feathers carried on a fellow's head? Come. You're a boastful race. Show yourselves superior to the dog, and tell me!

Now, I don't love many people; but I do love the undertakers. I except them from the censure I pass upon you in general. They know you so well, that I look upon 'em as a sort of Ravens. They are so certain of your being gen-teel parties, that they stick at nothing. They are sure they've got the upper hand of you. Our proprietor was reading the paper, only last night, and there was an advertisement in it from a sensitive and libelled undertaker, to wit, that the allegation "that funerals were unnecessarily expensive, was an insult to his professional brethren." Ha! ha! Why, he knows he has you on the hip.

It's nothing to him that their being unnecessarily expensive is a fact within the experience of all of you as glaring as the sun when there's not a cloud. He is certain that when you want a funeral "performed," he has only to be down upon you with Mrs. Grundy, to do what he likes with you—and then he'll go home, and laugh like a Hyæna.

I declare (supposing I wasn't detained against my will by our proprietor) that, if I had any arms, I'd take the undertakers to 'em! There's another, in the same paper, who says they're libelled, in the accusation of having disgracefully disturbed the meeting in favour of what you call your General Interment Bill. Our establishment was in the Strand, that night. There was no crowd of undertakers' men there, with circulars in their pockets, calling on 'em to come in coloured clothes to make an uproar; it wasn't undertakers' men who got in with forged orders to yell and screech; it wasn't undertakers' men who made a brutal charge at the platform, and overturned the ladies like a troop of horse. Of course not. *I* know all about it.

But—and lay this well to heart, you Lords of the creation, as you call yourselves!—it *is* these undertakers' men to whom, in the last trying, bitter grief of life, you confide the loved and honoured forms of your sisters, mothers, daughters, wives. It *is* to these delicate gentry, and to their solemn remarks, and decorous behaviour, that you entrust the sacred ashes of all that has been the purest to you, and the dearest to you, in this world. Don't improve the breed! Don't change the custom! Be true to my opinion of you, and to Mrs. Grundy!

I nail the black flag of the black Jobmaster to our cage—figuratively speaking—and I stand up for the gen-teel parties. So (but from different motives) does the Owl. You've got a chance, by means of that bill I've mentioned—by and by, I call my own a General Interment Bill, for it buries everything it gets hold of—to alter the whole system; to avail yourselves of the results of all improved European experience; to separate death from life; to surround it with everything that is sacred and solemn, and to dissever it from everything that is shocking and sordid. You won't read the bill? You won't dream of helping it? You won't think of looking at the evidence on which it's founded—Will you? No. That's right!

Gen-teel parties, step forward, if you please, to the rescue of the black Jobmaster! The rats are with you. I am informed that they have unanimously passed a resolution that the closing of the London churchyards will be an insult to their professional brethren, and will oblige 'em "to fight for it." The Parrots are with you. The Owl is with you. The Raven is with you. No General Interments. Carrion for ever!

Ha, ha! Halloa!

III

I SUPPOSE you thought I was dead? No such thing. Don't flatter yourselves that I haven't got my eye upon you. I am wide awake, and you give me plenty to look at.

I have begun my great work about you. I have been collecting materials from the Horse, to begin with. You are glad to hear it, ain't you? Very likely. Oh, he gives you a nice character. He makes you out a charming set of fellows.

He informs me, by the bye, that he is a distinct relation of the pony that was taken up in a balloon a few weeks ago; and that the pony's account of your going to see him at Vauxhall Gardens, is an amazing thing. The pony says, that when he looked round on the assembled crowd, come to see the realisation of the wood-cut in the bill, he found it impossible to discover which was the real Mister Green—there were so many Mister Greens—and they were all so very green!

But that's the way with you. You know it is. Don't tell me! You'd go to see anything that other people went to see. And don't flatter yourselves that I am referring to "the vulgar curiosity," as you choose to call it, when you mean some curiosity in which you don't participate yourselves. The polite curiosity in this country, is as vulgar as any curiosity in the world.

Of course you'll tell me, no it isn't, but I say yes it is. What have you got to say for yourselves about the Nepaulese Princes, I should like to know? Why, there has been more crowding, and pressing, and pushing, and jostling, and struggling, and striving, in genteel houses this last season, on account of those Nepaulese Princes, than would take place in vulgar Cremorne Gardens and Greenwich Park, at Easter time and Whitsuntide! And what for? Do you know anything about 'em? Have you any idea why they came here? Can you put your finger on their country in the map? Have you ever asked yourselves a dozen common questions about its climate, natural history, government, productions, customs, religion, manners? Not you! Here are a couple of swarthy Princes very much out of their element, walking about in wide muslin trousers, and sprinkled all over with gems (like the clock-work figure on the old round platform in the street, grown up), and they're fashionable outlandish monsters, and it's a new excitement for you to get a stare at 'em. As to asking 'em to dinner and seeing 'em sit at table without eating in your company (unclean animals as you are!), you fall into raptures at that. Quite delicious, isn't it? Ugh, you dunderheaded boobies!

I wonder what there is, new and strange, that you *wouldn't* lionise, as you call it. Can you suggest anything? It's not a hippopotamus, I suppose. I hear from my brother-in-law in the Zoological Gardens, that you are always pelting away into the Regent's Park, by thousands, to see the hippopotamus. Oh, you're very fond of hippopotami, ain't you? You study one attentively, when you *do* see one, don't you? You come away, so much wiser than you went, reflecting so profoundly on the wonders of creation—eh?

Bah! You follow one another like wild geese, but you are not so good to eat!

These, however, are not the observations of my friend the Horse.

He takes you, in another point of view. Would you like to read his contribution to my Natural History of you? No? You shall then.

He is a Cab-horse now. He wasn't always, but he is now, and his usual stand is close to our Proprietor's usual stand. That's the way we have come into communication, we "dumb animals." Ha, ha! Dumb, too! Oh, the conceit of you men, because you can bother the community out of their five wits, by making speeches!

Well. I mentioned to this Horse that I should be glad to have his opinions and experiences of you. Here they are:

"At the request of my honourable friend the Raven, I proceed to offer a few remarks in reference to the animal called Man. I have had varied experience of this strange creature for fifteen years, and am now driven by a man, in the hackney cabriolet, number twelve thousand four hundred and fifty-two.

" The sense Man entertains of his own inferiority to the nobler animals—and I am now more particularly referring to the Horse—has impressed me forcibly, in the course of my career. If a Man knows a Horse well, he is prouder of it than of any knowledge of himself, within the range of his limited capacity. He regards it as the sum of all human acquisition. If he is learned in a Horse, he has nothing else to learn. And the same remark applies, with some little abatement, to his acquaintance with Dogs. I have seen a good deal of Man in my time, but I think I have never met a Man who didn't feel it necessary to his reputation to pretend, on occasion, that he knew something of Horses and Dogs, though he really knew nothing. As to making us a subject of conversation, my opinion is that we are more talked about, than history, philosophy, literature, art, and science, all put together. I have encountered innumerable gentlemen in the country, who were totally incapable of interest in anything but Horses and Dogs—except Cattle. And I have always been given to understand that they were the flower of the civilised world.

"It is very doubtful, to me, whether there is, upon the whole, anything Man is so ambitious to imitate, as an ostler, a jockey, a stage coachman, a horse-dealer, or a dog-fancier. There may be some other character which I do not immediately remember, that fires him with emulation; but, if there be, I am sure it is connected with Horses, or Dogs, or both. This is an unconscious compliment on the part of the tyrant, to the nobler animals, which I consider to be very remarkable. I have known Lords, and Baronets, and Members of Parliament, out of number, who have deserted every other calling, to become but indifferent stablemen or kennelmen, and be cheated on all hands by the real aristocracy of those pursuits who were regularly born to the business.

"All this, I say, is a tribute to our superiority which I consider to be very remarkable. Yet, still, I can't quite understand it. Man can hardly devote himself to us, in admiration of our virtues, because he never imitates them. We Horses are as honest, though I say it, as animals can be. If, under the pressure of circumstances, we submit to act at a Circus, for instance, we always show that we are acting. We never deceive anybody. We would scorn to do it. If we are called upon to do anything in earnest we do our best. If we are required to run a race falsely, and to lose when we could win, we are not to be relied upon, to commit a fraud; Man must come in at that point and force us to it. And the extraordinary circumstance to me, is, that Man (whom I take to be a powerful species of Monkey) is always making us nobler animals the instruments of his meanness and cupidity. The very name of our kind has become a byword for all sorts of trickery and cheating. We are as innocent as counters at a game—and yet this creature WILL play falsely with us!

"Man's opinion, good or bad, is not worth much, as any rational Horse knows. But, justice is justice; and what I complain of, is that Mankind talks of us as if We had something to do with all this. They say that such a man was 'ruined by Horses.' Ruined by Horses! They can't be open, even in that, and say he was ruined by Men; but they lay it at *our* stable-door! As if we ever ruined anybody, or were ever doing anything but being ruined ourselves, in our generous desire to fulfil the useful purposes of our existence!

"In the same way, we get a bad name as if we were profligate company. 'So-and-so got among Horses, and it was all up with him.' Why, *we* would have reclaimed him—*we* would have made him temperate, industrious, punctual, steady, sensible,—what harm would he ever have got from *us*, I should wish to ask?

"Upon the whole, speaking of him as I have found him, I should describe Man as an unmeaning and conceited creature, very seldom to be trusted, and not likely to make advances towards the honesty of the nobler animals. I should say that his power of warping the nobler animals to bad purposes, and damaging their reputation by his companionship, is, next to the art of growing oats, hay, carrots, and clover, one of his principal attributes. He is very unintelligible in his caprices; seldom expressing with distinctness what he wants of us; and relying greatly on our better judgment to find out. He is cruel, and fond of blood—particularly at a steeple-chase—and is very ungrateful.

"And yet, so far as I can understand, he worships us too. He sets up images of us (not particularly like, but meant to be) in the streets, and calls upon his fellows to admire them, and believe in them. As well as I can make out, it is not of the least importance what images of Men are put astride upon these images of Horses, for I don't find any famous personage among them—except one, and *his* image seems to have been contracted for, by the gross. The jockeys who ride our statues are very queer jockeys, it appears to me, but it is something to find Man even posthumously sensible of what he owes to us. I believe that when he has done any great wrong to any very distinguished Horse, deceased, he gets up a subscription to have an awkward likeness of him made, and erects it in a public place, to be generally venerated. I can find no other reason for the statues of us that abound.

"It must be regarded as a part of the inconsistency of Man, that he erects no statues to the Donkeys—who, though far inferior animals to ourselves, have great claims upon him. I should think a Donkey opposite the Horse at Hyde Park, another in Trafalgar Square, and a group of Donkeys, in brass, outside the Guildhall of the City of London (for I believe the Common Council Chamber is inside that building) would be pleasant and appropriate memorials.

"I am not aware that I can suggest anything more, to my honourable friend the Raven, which will not already have occurred to his fine intellect. Like myself, he is the victim of brute force, and must bear it until the present state of things is changed—as it possibly may be in the good time which I understand is coming, if I wait a little longer."

There! How do you like that? That's the Horse. You shall have another animal's sentiments, soon. I have communicated with plenty of 'em, and they are all down upon you. It's not I alone who have found you out. You are generally detected, I am happy to say, and shall be covered with confusion.

Talking about the horse, are you going to set up any more horses? Eh? Think a bit. Come! You haven't got horses enough yet, surely? Couldn't you put somebody else on horseback, and stick him up, at the cost of a few thousands? You have already statues to most of the "benefactors of mankind" (SEE ADVERTISEMENT) in your principal cities. You walk through groves of great inventors, instructors, discoverers, assuagers of pain, preventers of disease, suggesters of purifying thoughts, doers of noble deeds. Finish the list. Come!

Whom will you hoist into the saddle? Let's have a cardinal virtue! Shall it be Faith? Hope? Charity? Aye, Charity's the virtue to ride on horseback! Let's have Charity!

How shall we represent it? Eh? What do you think? Royal? Certainly. Duke? Of course. Charity always was typified in that way, from the time of a certain widow, downwards. And there's nothing less left to put up; all the commoners who were "benefactors of mankind" having had their statues in the public places, long ago.

How shall we dress it? Rags? Low. Drapery? Commonplace. Field-Marshal's uniform? The very thing! Charity in a Field-Marshal's uniform (none the worse for wear) with thirty thousand pounds a year, public money, in its pocket, and fifteen thousand more, public money, up behind, will be a piece of plain uncompromising truth in the highways, and an honour to the country and the time.

Ha, ha, ha! You can't leave the memory of an unassuming, honest, good-natured, amiable old Duke alone, without bespattering it with your flunkeyism, can't you? That's right—and like you! Here are three brass buttons in my crop. I'll subscribe 'em all. One, to the statue of Charity; one, to a statue of Hope; one, to a statue of Faith. For Faith, we'll have the Nepaulese Ambassador on horseback—being a prince. And for Hope, we'll put the Hippopotamus on horseback, and so make a group.

Let's have a meeting about it!

PROPOSALS FOR A NATIONAL JEST-BOOK

It has been ascertained, within the last two years, that Britannia is in want of nothing but an official joker. Having such exalted officer to poke her in the ribs when she considers her condition serious, and to put her off with a wink when she utters a groan, she must certainly be flourishing and it shall be heresy to doubt the fact. By this sign ye shall know it.

My patriotism and my national pride have been so warmed by the discovery, that, following out the great idea, I have reduced to writing a scheme for the re-establishment of the obsolete office of Court Joker. It would be less expensive to maintain than a First Lord of the Jokery, and might lead to the discovery of better jokes than issue from that Department. My scheme is an adaptation of a plan I matured some years ago, for the revival of the office of Lord Mayor's Fool; a design which, I am authorised to mention, would have been adopted by the City of London, but for that eminent body, the Common Council, agreeing to hold the office in Commission, and to satisfy the public, in all their Addresses to great personages, that they are never unmindful of its comic duties.

It is not, however, of either of these ingenious proposals (if I may be permitted to call them so) that I now desire to treat. It is of another and far more comprehensive project for the compilation of a National Jest-Book.

Few people, I submit, can fail to have observed what rich materials for such a collection are constantly being strewn about. The Parliamentary debates, the audiences given to deputations at the public offices, the proceedings of Courts of Enquiry, the published correspondence of distinguished personages, teem with the richest humour. Is it not a reproach to us, as a humorous nation, that we have no recognised Encyclopædia of these facetious treasures, which may be preserved, and (in course of time), catalogued, by Signor Panizzi in the British Museum?

What I propose is, that a learned body of not fewer than forty members, each to receive two thousand five hundred pounds per annum, free of Income Tax, and the whole to be chosen from the younger sons, nephews, cousins and cousin-germans, of the Aristocracy, be immediately appointed in perpetuity for the compilation of a National Jest-Book. That, in these appointments, the preference shall be given to those young noblemen and gentlemen who know the least of the subject, and that every care shall be taken to exclude qualified persons. That, the First Lord of the Jokery be, in right of his office, the President of this Board, and that in his patronage the appointments shall rest. That, it shall meet as seldom as it thinks proper. That, no one shall be a quorum. That on the first of April in every year, this learned society shall publish an annual volume, in imperial quarto, of the National Jest-Book, price Ten Pounds.

I foresee that I shall be met at this point by the objection that the proposed price is high, and that the sale of the National Jest-Book, will not remunerate the country for the cost of its production. But, this objection will instantly vanish when I proceed to state that it is one of my leading ideas to make this gem of books the source of an immense addition to the public revenue, by passing an act of Parliament to render it compulsory on all householders rated to the relief of the poor in the annual value of twenty-five pounds, to take a copy. The care of this measure I would entrust to Mr. Frederick Peel, the distinguished Under-Secretary for War, whose modest talents, conciliatory demeanour, and remarkable success in quartering soldiers on all the private families of Scotland, particularly point him out as the Statesman for the purpose.

As the living languages are not much esteemed in the public schools frequented by the superior classes, and as it might be on the whole expedient to publish a National collection in the National tongue (though too common and accessible), it is probable that some revision of the labours of the learned Board would be necessary before any volume should be finally committed to the press. Such revision I would entrust to the Royal Literary Fund, finding it to have one professor of literature a member of its managing committee. It might not be amiss to embellish the first volume of the National Jest-Book with a view of that wealthy institution, and with explanatory letterpress descriptive of its spending forty pounds in giving away a hundred; of its being governed by a council which can never meet nor be by any earthly power called together, of its boasted secrets touching the distresses of authors being officially accessible at all times, to more than one publisher; and of its being a neat example of a practical joke.

The style of the National Jest-Book, in narrating those choice pieces of wit and humour of which it will be the storehouse, to be strictly limited (as everything in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland ought to be), by precedent. No departure from the established Jest-Book method, to be sanctioned on any account. If the good old style were sufficient for our forefathers, it is sufficient for the present and all future generations. In my desire to render these proposals, plain, complete, and practical, I proceed to offer some specimens of the manner in which the National Jest-Book will require to be conducted.

As, in the precedents, there is a supposititious personage, by name Tom Brown, upon whom witty observations are fathered which there is a difficulty in fastening on any one else, so, in the National Collection, it will be indispensable to introduce a similar fiction. I propose that a certain imaginary Mr. Bull be established as the Tom Brown of the National collection.

Let us suppose, for example, that the learned Board, in pursuing their labours for the present year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, were reducing to writing the National jests of the month of April. They would proceed according to the following example.

BULL AND THE M.P.

A waggish member of Parliament, when vaccination had been introduced by Dr. Jenner upwards of half a century, and had saved innumerable thousands of people from premature death, from suffering, and from disfigurement—as, down to that time, had been equally well-known to wise men and fools—rose in his place in the House of Commons and denounced it forsooth. "For," says he, "it is a failure, and the cause of death." One meeting Mr. Bull, and telling him of this pretty speech, and further of its eliciting from that astonishing assembly no demonstration. "Aye," cries Bull, looking mighty grave, "but if the Member for Nineveh had mistaken, in that same place, the Christian name of a Cornet in the Guards, you should have had howling enough!"

Again, another example.

BULL AND THE BISHOP

A certain Bishop who was officially a learned priest and a devout, but who was individually either imbecile or an abusive and indecent common fellow, printed foul letters wherein he called folks by bad names, as Devils, Liars, and the like. A Cambridge man, meeting Bull, asked him of what family this Bishop was and to whom he was related? "Nay, I know not," cries Bull, "but I take my oath he is neither of the line of the apostles, nor descends from their Master." "How, now," quoth the Cambridge man, "hath he no connection with the Fishermen?" "He hath the connection that Billingsgate hath with Fishermen, and no other," says Bull. "But," quoth the Cambridge man again, "I understand him to be great in the dead tongues." "He may be that too," says Bull, "and yet be small in the living ones, for he can neither write his own tongue nor yet hold it."

Sometimes it would be necessary, as in the Tom Brown precedents, to represent Bull in the light of being innocently victimised, and as not possessing that readiness which characterises him in the foregoing models. The learned body forming the National Collection would then adopt the following plan.

BULL GOT THE BETTER OF

Bull, riding once from market on a stout Galloway nag, was met upon the Tiverton highway by a footpad in a soldier's coat (an old hand), who rifled him of all he carried and jeered him besides, saying, "A fig for you. I can wind you round my finger, I can pull your nose any day,"—and doing it, too, contemptuously, while he spoke, so that he brought the blood mounting into Bull's cheeks. "Prithee tell me," says Bull, pacifically, "why do you want my money?" "For the vigorous prosecution of your war against the birds of prey," replies the fellow with his tongue in his cheek,—who indeed had been hired by Bull to scare those vermin, just when the farm-traps and blunderbusses had been found to be horribly out of order, and were beginning to be put right. For which he now took all the credit. "But what have you done?" asks Bull. "Never *you* mind," says the fellow, tweaking him by the nose again. "You have not made one good shot in any direction that I know of," cried Bull; "is *that* vigorous prosecution?" "Yes," cries the fellow, tweaking him by the nose again. "You have discomfited me the best and bravest boys I sent into the field," says Bull; "is *that* vigorous prosecution?" "Yes," cries the fellow, tweaking him by the nose again. "You have brought down upon my head the heaviest and shamefullest book with a blue cover (called the Fall of Kars) in all my library," says Bull; "is *that* vigorous prosecution?" "Yes," says the fellow, tweaking him by the nose again. "Then," whispers Bull to his Galloway nag, as he gave him the rein, "you and I had better jog along feebly, for it should seem to be the only true way of prospering." And so sneaked off.

Occasionally, the learned body would resort to the dialogue form, for variety's sake. As thus;—throughout these instances, I suppose them engaged with the compilation for the month of April in the present year.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN BULL AND A PERSON OF QUALITY

PERSON OF Q. So, Bull, how dost?

BULL. My humble duty and service to your lordship, with your lordship's gracious leave—I am tolerable.

PERSON OF Q. The better for a firm, and durable, and glorious peace; eh, Bull?

BULL. Humph!

PERSON OF Q. Why, what a curmudgeon art thou, Bull! Dost thou begrudge the peace!

BULL. The Lord forbid, my humble duty and service to your noble lordship. But I was thinking (by your lordship's favour) how best to keep it.

PERSON OF Q. Be easy on that point. There shall be a great standing-army, and a great navy, and your relations and friends shall have more than their share of the bad, doubtful, and indifferent posts in both.

BULL. How as to the good posts, your honourable lordship?

PERSON OF Q. Hump! (laughing).

BULL. Will your noble honour vouchsafe me a word?

PERSON OF Q. Quickly then, Bull, and don't be prosy. I can't abide being bored.

BULL. I humbly thank your noble honourable lordship for your noble honour's kind permission. Army and navy, I know, will both be necessary; but, I was thinking (saving your noble lordship's gracious presence) that my good friends and allies the people of France can move in concert in large bodies, and are accustomed to the use of arms.

PERSON OF Q. (frowning). A military nation. None of that here, Bull, none of that here!

BULL. With your noble lordship's magnificent toleration, I would respectfully crave leave to scatter a few deferential syllables in the radiancy of your noble countenance. I find that this characteristic is not peculiar to my friends the French, but belongs, more or less, to all the peoples of Europe: whereof the English are the only people possessing the peculiarity of being quite untrained in the power of associating to defend themselves, their children, their women, and their native land. Will your noble honour's magnanimity bear with me if I represent that your noble lordship has for some years now, discouraged the old British spirit, and disarmed the British hand? Your noble honour's Game Preserves, and political sentiments, have been the cause of——

PERSON OF Q. (interrupting). 'Sdeath, Bull, I am bored. Make an end of this.

BULL. With your honour's gracious attention, I will finish this minute. I was about to represent, with my humblest duty to your noble lordship, that if your honourable grace could find it in your benignity to take the occasion of this Peace to trust your countrymen a little—to show some greater confidence in their love of their country and their loyalty to their sovereign—to think more of the peasants and less of the pheasants—and if your worship's loftiness could deign to encourage the common English clay to become moulded into so much of a soldierly shape as would make it a rampart for the whole empire, and place the Englishman on an equality with the Frenchmen, the Piedmontese, the German, the American, the Swiss, your noble honour would therein do a great right, timely, which you will otherwise, as certain as Death, (if your noble lordship will excuse that levelling word), at last condescend to try to do in a hurry when it shall be too late.

PERSON OF Q. (yawning). Prithee, get out, Bull. This is revolutionary, and what not; and I am bored.

BULL. I humbly thank your noble lordship for your gracious attention. (And so, bowing low, retires, expressing his high sense of the courtesy and patience with which he has had the distinguished honour of being received.)

I shall conclude by offering one other example for the guidance of the learned Commission of forty compilers, which I have no doubt will be appointed within a short time after the publication of these suggestions. It is important, as introducing Mrs. Bull, and showing how she may be discreetly admitted into the National Jest-Book, on occasions, with the conjugal object of eliciting Mr. Bull's best points.

Example.

MRS. BULL'S CURLPAPERS

Bull, in this same month of April, takes it into his head that he will make a trip to France. So away he goes, after first repairing to the warehouse of honest Murray in Albemarle Street, Piccadilly, to buy a guide-book, and travels with all diligence both to Paris and Bordeaux. Suddenly, and while Mrs. Bull supposeth him to be sojourning in the wine-growing countries, not drinking water there you may be sure, lo, he reappeareth at his own house in London, attended by a great wagon filled with newspapers! Mrs. Bull, admiring to see so many newspapers and those foreign, asks him why he hath returned so soon and with that cargo? Saith Bull, "They are French curlpapers for thy head, my dear." Mrs. Bull protests that in all her life she never can have need of a hundredth part of that store. "Anyhow," saith Bull, "put them away in the dark, housewife, for I am heartily ashamed of them." "Ashamed of them!" says she. "Yes," retorts Bull, "and thus it is. While I was in France, sweetheart, a deputation waited on the Government in England, touching the duties on foreign wines. And the French newspapers were so astounded by the jokery with which the deputation was received, and by the ignorance of the Government, which was wrong in all its statements (one of the best informed among them computes to the extent, in one calculation, of seventeen hundred and fifty per cent.), that I was ashamed to see those journals lying about, and bought up all I could find!"

My project for a National Jest-Book is now before the Public. I would merely remark, in conclusion, that if the revenue arising from the compulsory purchase of the collection should enable our enlightened Government to dispense with the Income Tax, the Public will be the gainers: inasmuch as the new impost will provide them with something tangible to show for their money.

THINGS THAT CANNOT BE DONE

Nothing flagrantly wrong can be done, without adequate punishment, under the English law. What a comfortable truth that is! I have always admired the English law with all my heart, as being plain, cheap, comprehensive, easy, unmistakable, strong to help the right doer, weak to help the wrong doer, entirely free from adherence to barbarous usages which the world has passed, and knows to be ridiculous and unjust. It is delightful never to see the law at fault, never to find it in what our American relatives call a fix, never to behold a scoundrel able to shield himself with it, always to contemplate the improving spectacle of Law in its wig and gown leading blind Justice by the hand and keeping her in the straight broad course.

I am particularly struck, at the present time, by the majesty with which the Law protects its own humble administrators. Next to the punishment of any offence by fining the offender in a sum of money—which is a practice of the Law, too enlightened and too obviously just and wise, to need any commendation—the penalties inflicted on an intolerable brute who maims a police officer for life, make my soul expand with a solemn joy. I constantly read in the newspaper of such an offender being committed to prison with hard labour, for one, two, or even three months. Side by side with such a case, I read the statement of a surgeon to the police force, that within such a specified short time, so many men have been under his care for similar injuries; so many of whom have recovered, after undergoing a refinement of pain expressly contemplated by their assailants in the nature of their attack; so many of whom, being permanently debilitated and incapacitated, have been dismissed the force. Then, I know that a wild beast in a man's form cannot gratify his savage hatred of those who check him in the perpetration of crime, without suffering a thousand times more than the object of his wrath, and without being made a certain and a stern example. And this is one of the occasions on which the beauty of the Law of England fills me with the solemn joy I have mentioned.

The pæans I have of late been singing within myself on the subject of the determination of the Law to prevent by severe punishment the oppression and ill-treatment of Women, have been echoed in the public journals. It is true that an ill-conditioned friend of mine, possessing the remarkably inappropriate name of Common Sense, is not fully satisfied on this head. It is true that he says to me, "Will you look at these cases of brutality, and tell me whether you consider six years of the hardest prison task-work (instead of six months) punishment enough for such enormous cruelty? Will you read the increasing records of these violences from day to day, as more and more sufferers are gradually encouraged by a law of six months' standing to disclose their long endurance, and will you consider what a legal system that must be which only now applies an imperfect remedy to such a giant evil? Will you think of the torments and murders of a dark perspective of past years, and ask yourself the question whether in exulting so mightily, at this time of day, over a law faintly asserting the lowest first principle of all law, you are not somewhat sarcastic on the virtuous Statues at Large, piled up there on innumerable shelves?" It is true, I say, that my ill-conditioned friend does twit me, and the law I dote on, after this manner; but it is enough for me to know, that for a man to maim and kill his wife by inches—or even the woman, wife or no wife, who shares his home —without most surely incurring a punishment, the justice of which satisfies the mind and heart of the common level of humanity, is one of the things that cannot be done.

But, deliberately, falsely, defamingly, publicly and perseveringly, to pursue and outrage any woman is foremost among the things that cannot be done. Of course, it cannot be done. This is the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three; and Steam and Electricity would indeed have left the limping Law behind, if it *could* be done in the present age.

Let me put an impossible case, to illustrate at once my admiration of the Law, and its tender care for Women. This may be an appropriate time for doing so, when most of us are complimenting the Law on its avenging gallantry.

Suppose a young lady to be left a great heiress, under circumstances which cause the general attention to be attracted to her name. Suppose her to be modest, retiring, otherwise only known for her virtues, charities, and noble actions. Suppose an abandoned sharper, so debased, so wanting in the manhood of a commonly vile swindler, so lost to every sense of shame and disgrace, as to conceive the original idea of hunting this young lady through life until she buys him off with money. Suppose him to adjust the speculation deliberately with himself. "I know nothing of her, I never saw her; but I am a bankrupt, with no character and no trade that brings me in any money; and I mean to make the pursuit of her, my trade. She seeks retirement; I will drag her out of it. She avoids notoriety; I will force it upon her. She is rich; she shall stand and deliver. I am poor; I will have plunder. The opinion of society. What is that to me? I know the Law, and the Law will be *my* friend—not hers."

It is very difficult, I know, to suppose such a set of circumstances, or to imagine such an animal not caged behind iron bars or knocked on the head. But, let us stretch elastic fancy to such an extreme point of supposition. He goes to work at the trade he has taken up, and works at it, industriously, say for fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years. He invents the most preposterous and transparent lies, which not one human being whose ears they ever reach, can possibly believe.

He pretends that the lady promised to marry him—say, in a nonsensical jingle of rhymes which he produces, and which he says and swears (for what will he not say and swear, except the truth?) is the production of the lady's hand. Before incapable country justices, and dim little farthing rushlights of the law, he drags this lady at his pleasure, whenever he will. He makes the Law a screw to force the hand she has had the courage to close upon her purse from the beginning. He makes the Law a rack on which to torture her constancy, her affections, her consideration for the living, and her veneration for the dead. He shakes the letter of the Law over the heads of the puny tribunals he selects for his infamous purpose, and frightens them into an endurance of his audacious mendacity. Because the Law is a Law of the peddling letter and not of the comprehensive spirit, this magistrate shall privately bribe him with money to condescend to overlook his omission (sanctioned by the practice of years) of some miserable form as to the exact spot in which he puts his magisterial signature upon a document; and that commissioner shall publicly compliment him upon his extraordinary acquirements, when it is manifest upon the face of the written evidence before the same learned commissioner's eyes in court, that he cannot so much as spell. But he knows the Law. And the letter of the Law is with the rascal and not with the rascal's prey.

For, we are to suppose that all through these years, he is never punished with any punishment worthy of the name, for his real offence. He is now and then held to bail, gets out of prison, and goes to his trade again. He commits wilful and corrupt perjury, down a byeway, and is lightly punished for that ; but he takes his brazen face along the high road of his guilt, uncrushed. The blundering, babbling, botched Law, in splitting hairs with him, makes business for itself; they get on very well together—worthy companions—shepherds both.

Now, I am willing to admit that if such a case as this, could by any possibility be; if it could go on so long and so publicly, as that the whole town should have the facts within its intimate knowledge; if it were as well known as the Queen's name; if it never presented itself afresh, in any court, without awakening an honest indignation in the breasts of all the audience not learned in the Law; and yet if this nefarious culprit were just as free to drive his trade at last as he was at first, and the object of his ingenious speculation could find absolutely no redress; then, and in that case, I say, I am willing to admit that the Law would be a false pretence and a self-convicted failure. But, happily, and as we all know, this is one of the things that cannot be done.

No. Supposing such a culprit face to face with it, the Law would address him thus. "Stand up, knave, and hear me! I am not the thing of shreds and patches you suppose. I am not the degraded creature whom any wretch may invoke to gratify his basest appetites and do his dirtiest work. Not for that, am I part and parcel of a costly system maintained with cheerfulness out of the labours of a great free people. Not for that, do I continually glorify my Bench and my Bar, and, from my high place, look complacently upon a sea of wigs. I am not a jumble and jargon of words, fellow; I am a Principle. I was set up here, by those who can pull me down—and will, if I be incapable—to punish the wrong-doer, for the sake of the body-politic in whose name I act, and from whom alone my power is derived. I know you, well, for a wrong-doer; I have it in proof before me that you are a forsworn, crafty, defiant, bullying, pestilent impostor. And if I be not an impostor too, and a worse one, my plainest duty is to set my heel upon you—which I mean to do before you go hence.

"Attend to me yet, knave. Hold your peace! You are one of those landsharks whose eyes have twinkled to see the driving of coaches and six through Acts of Parliament, and who come up with their dirty little dog's meat carts to follow through the same crooked ways. But you shall know, that I am something more than a maze of tortuous ins and outs, and that I have at least, one plain road—to wit, the road by which, for the general protection, and in the exercise of my first function, I mean to send you into safe keeping; fifty thousand Acts, and a hundred thousand Caps, and five hundred thousand Secs, notwithstanding.

"For, Beast of Prey, above, the perplexed letter of all Law that has any might in it, goes the spirit. If I can be, as I claim to be, the child of Justice, and not the offspring of the Artful Dodger, that spirit shall, before I gabble through one legal argument more, provide for you and all the like of you, as you deserve. If it cannot do that of itself, I will have letter to help it. But I will not remain here, a spectacle and a scandal to those who are the breath of my nostrils, with your dirty hands clinging to my robe, your brazen lungs misrepresenting me, your shameless face beslavering me in my prostitution."

Thus the Law clearly would address any such impossible person. For this reason, among others not dissimilar, I glory in the Law, and am ready at all times to shed my best blood to uphold it. For this reason too, I am proud, as an Englishman, to know that such a design upon a woman as I have, in a wild moment, imagined, is not to be entered upon, and is—as it ought to be—one of the things that can never be done.

THE THOUSAND AND ONE HUMBUGS

I

Everybody is acquainted with that enchanting collection of stories, the Thousand and One Nights, better known in England as the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. Most people know that these wonderful fancies are unquestionably of genuine Eastern origin, and are to be found in Arabic manuscripts now existing in the Vatican, in Paris, in London, and in Oxford; the last-named city being particularly distinguished in this connection, as possessing in the library of Christchurch, a manuscript of the never-to-be-forgotten Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor.

The civilised world is indebted to France for a vast amount of its possessions, and among the rest for the first opening to Europe of this gorgeous storehouse of Eastern riches. So well did M. Galland, the original translator, perform his task, that when Mr. Wortley Montague brought home the manuscript now in the Bodleian Library, there was found (poetical quotations excepted), to be very little, and that of a very inferior kind, to add to what M. Galland had already made perfectly familiar to France and England.

Thus much as to the Thousand and One Nights, we recall, by way of introduction to the discovery we are about to announce.

There has lately fallen into our hands, a manuscript in the Arabic Character (with which we are perfectly acquainted), containing a variety of stories extremely similar in structure and incident to the Thousand and One Nights; but presenting the strange feature that although they are evidently of ancient origin, they have a curious accidental bearing on the present time. Allowing for the difference of manners and customs, it would often seem—were it not for the manifest impossibility of such prophetic knowledge in any mere man or men—that they were written expressly with an eye to events of the current age. We have referred the manuscript (which may be seen at our office on the first day of April in every year, at precisely four o'clock in the morning), to the profoundest Oriental Scholars of England and France, who are no less sensible than we are ourselves of this remarkable coincidence, and are equally at a loss to account for it. They are agreed, we may observe, on the propriety of our rendering the title in the words, The Thousand and One Humbugs. For, although the Eastern story-tellers do not appear to have possessed any word, or combination of parts of words, precisely answering to the modern English Humbug (which, indeed, they expressed by the figurative phrase, A Camel made of sand), there is no doubt that they were conversant with so common a thing, and further that the thing was expressly meant to be designated in the general title of the Arabic manuscript now before us. Dispensing with further explanation, we at once commence the specimens we shall occasionally present, of this literary curiosity.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

Among the ancient Kings of Persia who extended their glorious conquests into the Indies, and far beyond the famous River Ganges, even to the limits of China, Taxedtaurus (or Fleeced Bull) was incomparably the most renowned. He was so rich that he scorned to undertake the humblest enterprise without inaugurating it by ordering his Treasurers to throw several millions of pieces of gold into the dirt. For the same reason he attached no value to his foreign possessions, but merely used them as playthings for a little while, and then always threw them away or lost them.

This wise Sultan, though blessed with innumerable sources of happiness, was afflicted with one fruitful cause of discontent. He had been married many scores of times, yet had never found a wife to suit him. Although he had raised to the dignity of Howsa Kummauns[1] (or Peerless Chatterer), a great variety of beautiful creatures, not only of the lineage of the high nobles of his court, but also selected from other classes of his subjects, the result had uniformly been the same. They proved unfaithful, brazen, talkative, idle, extravagant, inefficient, and boastful. Thus it naturally happened that a Howsa Kummauns very rarely died a natural death, but was generally cut short in some violent manner.

At length, the young and lovely Reefawm (that is to say Light of Reason), the youngest and fairest of all the Sultan's wives, and to whom he had looked with hope to recompense him for his many disappointments, made as bad a Howsa Kummauns as any of the rest. The unfortunate Taxedtaurus took this so much to heart that he fell into a profound melancholy, secluded himself from observation, and for some time was so seldom seen or heard of that many of his great officers of state supposed him to be dead.

Shall I never, said the unhappy Monarch, beating his breast in his retirement in the Pavilion of Failure, and giving vent to his tears, find a Howsa Kummauns, who will be true to me! He then quoted from the Poet, certain verses importing, Every Howsa Kummauns has deceived me, Every Howsa Kummauns is a Humbug, I must slay the present Howsa Kummauns as I have slain so many others, I am brought to shame and mortification, I am despised by the world. After which his grief so overpowered him, that he fainted away.

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[1] Sounded like House o' Commons.

It happened that on recovering his senses he heard the voice of the last-made Howsa Kummauns, in the Divan adjoining. Applying his ear to the lattice, and finding that that shameless Princess was vaunting her loyalty and virtue, and denying a host of facts—which she always did, all night—the Sultan drew his scimetar in a fury, resolved to put an end to her existence.

But, the Grand Vizier Parmarstoon (or Twirling Weathercock), who was at that moment watching his incensed master from behind the silken curtains of the Pavilion of Failure, hurried forward and prostrated himself, trembling on the ground. This Vizier had newly succeeded to Abaddeen (or the Addled), who had for his misdeeds been strangled with a garter.

The breath of the slave, said the Vizier, is in the hands of his Lord, but the Lion will sometimes deign to listen to the croaking of the frog. I swear to thee, Vizier, replied the Sultan, that I have borne too much already and will bear no more. Thou and the Howsa Kummauns are in one story, and by the might of Allah and the beard of the Prophet, I have a mind to destroy ye both!

When the Vizier heard the Sultan thus menace him with destruction, his heart drooped within him. But, being a brisk and ready man, though stricken in years, he quoted certain lines from the Poet, implying that the thunder-cloud often spares the leaf or there would be no fruit, and touched the ground with his forehead in token of submission. What wouldst thou say? demanded the generous Prince, I give thee leave to speak. Thou are not unaccustomed to public speaking; speak glibly! Sire, returned the Vizier, but for the dread of the might of my Lord, I would reply in the words addressed by the ignorant man to the Genie. And what were those words? demanded the Sultan. Repeat them! Parmarstoon replied, To hear is to obey:

THE STORY OF THE IGNORANT MAN AND THE GENIE

Sire, on the barbarous confines of the kingdom of the Tartars, there dwelt an ignorant man, who was obliged to make a journey through the Great Desert of Desolation; which, as your Majesty knows, is sometimes a journey of upwards of three score and ten years. He bade adieu to his mother very early in the morning, and departed without a guide, ragged, barefoot, and alone. He found the way surprisingly steep and rugged, and beset by vile serpents and strange unintelligible creatures of horrible shapes. It was likewise full of black bogs and pits, into which he not only fell himself, but often had the misfortune to drag other travellers whom he encountered, and who got out no more, but were miserably stifled.

Sire, on the fourteenth day of the journey of the ignorant man of the kingdom of the Tartars, he sat down to rest by the side of a foul well (being unable to find a better), and there cracked for a repast, as he best could, a very hard nut, which was all he had about him. He threw the shell anywhere as he stripped it off, and having made an end of his meal arose to wander on again, when suddenly the air was darkened, he heard a frightful cry, and saw a monstrous Genie, of gigantic stature, who brandished a mighty scimetar in a hand of iron, advancing towards him. Rise, ignorant beast, said the monster, as he drew nigh, that I, Law, may kill thee for having affronted my ward. Alas, my lord, returned the ignorant man, how can I have affronted thy ward whom I never saw? He is invisible to thee, returned the Genie, because thou art a benighted barbarian, but if thou hadst ever learnt any good thing thou wouldst have seen him plainly, and wouldst have respected him. Lord of my life, pleaded the traveller, how could I learn where there were none to teach me, and how affront thy ward whom I have not the power to see? I tell thee, returned the Genie, that with thy pernicious refuse thou hast struck my ward, Prince Socieetee, in the apple of the eye; and because thou hast done this, I will be thy ruin. I maim and kill the like of thee by thousands every year, for no other crime. And shall I spare *thee*? Kneel and receive the blow.

Your Majesty will believe (continued the Grand Vizier) that the ignorant man of the kingdom of the Tartars, gave himself up for lost when he heard those cruel words. Without so much as repeating the formula of our faith—There is but one Allah, from him we come, to him we must return, and who shall resist his will (for he was too ignorant even to have heard it)—he bent his neck to receive the fatal stroke. His head rolled off as he finished saying these words: Dread Law, if thou hadst taken half the pains to teach me to discern thy ward that thou hast taken to avenge him, thou hadst been spared the great account to which I summon thee!

Taxedtaurus the Sultan of Persia listened attentively to this recital on the part of his Grand Vizier, and when it was concluded said, with a threatening brow, Expound to me, O nephew of a dog! the points of resemblance between the Tiger and the Nightingale, and what thy ignorant man of the accursed kingdom of the Tartars has to do with the false Howsa Kummauns and the glib Vizier Parmarstoon? While speaking he again raised his glittering scimetar. Let not my master sully the sole of his foot by crushing an insect, returned the Vizier, kissing the ground seven times, I meant but to offer up a petition from the dust, that the Light of the eyes of the Faithful would, before striking, deign to hear my daughter. What of thy daughter? said the Sultan impatiently, and why should I hear thy daughter any more than the daughter of the dirtiest of the dustmen? Sire, returned the Vizier, I am dirtier than the dirtiest of the dustmen in your Majesty's sight, but my daughter is deeply read in the history of every Howsa Kummauns who has aspired to your Majesty's favour during many years, and if your Majesty would condescend to hear some of the Legends she has to relate, they might—— What dost thou call thy daughter? demanded the Sultan, interrupting. Hansardadade, replied the Vizier. Go, said the Sultan, bring her hither. I spare thy life until thou shalt return.

The Grand Vizier Parmarstoon, on receiving the injunction to bring his daughter Hansardadade into the royal presence, lost no time in repairing to his palace which was but across the Sultan's gardens, and going straight to the women's apartments, found Hansardadade surrounded by a number of old women who were all consulting her at once. In truth, this affable Princess was perpetually being referred to, by all manner of old women. Hastily causing her attendants, when she heard her father's errand, to attire her in her finest dress which outsparkled the sun; and bidding her young sister, Brothartoon (or Chamber Candlestick), to make similar preparations and accompany her; the daughter of the Grand Vizier soon covered herself with a rich veil, and said to her father, with a low obeisance, Sir, I am ready to attend you, to my Lord, the Commander of the Faithful.

The Grand Vizier, and his daughter Hansardadade, and her young sister Brothartoon, preceded by Mistaspeeka, a black mute, the Chief of the officers of the royal Seraglio, went across the Sultan's gardens by the way the Vizier had come, and arriving at the Sultan's palace, found that monarch on his throne surrounded by his principal counsellors and officers of state. They all four prostrated themselves at a distance, and waited the Sultan's pleasure. That gracious prince was troubled in his mind when he commanded the fair Hansardadade (who, on the whole, was very fair indeed), to approach, for he had sworn an oath in the Vizier's absence from which he could not depart. Nevertheless, as it must be kept, he proceeded to announce it before the assembly. Vizier, said he, thou hast brought thy daughter here, as possessing a large stock of Howsa Kummauns experience, in the hope of her relating something that may soften me under my accumulated wrongs. Know that I have solemnly sworn that if her stories fail—as I believe they will—to mitigate my wrath, I will have her burned and her ashes cast to the winds! Also, I will strangle thee and the present Howsa Kummauns, and will take a new one every day and strangle her as soon as taken, until I find a good and true one. Parmarstoon replied, To hear is to obey.

Hansardadade then took a one-stringed lute, and sang a lengthened song in prose. Its purport was, I am the recorder of brilliant eloquence, I am the chronicler of patriotism, I am the pride of sages, and the joy of nations. The continued salvation of the country is owing to what I preserve, and without it there would be no business done. Sweet are the voices of the crow and chough, and Persia never never never can have words enough. At the conclusion of this delightful strain, the Sultan and the whole divan were so faint with rapture that they remained in a comatose state for seven hours.

Would your Majesty, said Hansardadade, when all were at length recovered, prefer first to hear the story of the Wonderful Camp, or the story of the Talkative Barber, or the story of Scarli Tapa and the Forty Thieves? I would have thee commence, replied the Sultan, with the story of the Forty Thieves.

Hansardadade began, Sire, there was once a poor relation—when

Brothartoon interposed. Dear sister, cried Brothartoon, it is now past midnight, it will be shortly daybreak, and if you are not asleep, you ought to be. I pray you, dear sister, by all means to hold your tongue to-night, and if my Lord the Sultan will suffer you to live another day, you can talk to-morrow. The Sultan arose with a clouded face, but went out without giving any orders for the execution.

II

THE STORY OF SCARLI TAPA AND THE FORTY THIEVES

Accompanied by the Grand Vizier Parmarstoon, and the black mute Mistaspecka the chief of the Seraglio, Hansardadade again repaired next day to the august presence, and, after making the usual prostrations before the Sultan, began thus:

Sire, there was once a poor relation who lived in a town in the dominions of the Sultan of the Indies, and whose name was Scarli Tapa. He was the youngest son of a Dowajah—which, as your Majesty knows, is a female spirit of voracious appetites, and generally with a wig and a carmine complexion, who prowls about old houses and preys upon mankind. This Dowajah had attained an immense age, in consequence of having been put by an evil Genie on the Penshunlist, or talisman to secure long life; but, at length she very reluctantly died towards the close of a quarter, after making the most affecting struggles to live into the half-year.

Scarli Tapa had a rich elder brother named Cashim, who had married the daughter of a prosperous merchant, and lived magnificently. Scarli Tapa, on the other hand, could barely support his wife and family by lounging about the town and going out to dinner with his utmost powers of perseverance, betting on horse-races, playing at billiards, and running into debt with everybody who would trust him—the last being his principal means of obtaining an honest livelihood.

One day, when Scarli Tapa had strolled for some time along the banks of a great river of liquid filth which ornamented that agreeable country and rendered it salubrious, he found himself in the neighbourhood of the Woods and Forests. Lifting up his eyes, he observed in the distance a great cloud of dust. He was not surprised to see it, knowing those parts to be famous for casting prodigious quantities of dust into the eyes of the Faithful; but, as it rapidly advanced towards him, he climbed into a tree, the better to observe it without being seen himself.

As the cloud of dust approached, Scarli Tapa perceived it from his hiding-place to be occasioned by forty mounted robbers, each bestriding a severely-goaded and heavily-laden Bull. The whole troop came to a halt at the foot of the tree, and all the robbers dismounted. Every robber then tethered his hack to the most convenient shrub, gave it a full meal of very bad chaff, and hung over his arm the empty sack which had contained the same. Then the Captain of the Robbers, advancing to a door in an antediluvian rock, which Scarli Tapa had not observed before, and on which were the enchanted letters O.F.F.I.C.E., said, Debrett's Peerage. Open Sesame! As soon as the Captain of the Robbers had uttered these words, the door, obedient to the charm, flew open, and all the robbers went in. The captain went in last, and the door shut on itself.

The robbers stayed so long within the rock that Scarli Tapa more than once felt tempted to descend the tree and make off. Fearful, however, that they might reappear and catch him before he could escape, he remained hidden by the leaves, as patiently as he could. At last the door opened, and the forty robbers came out. As the captain had gone in last, he came out first, and stood to see the whole troop pass him. When they had all done so, he said, Debrett's Peerage. Shut Sesame! The door immediately closed again as before! Every robber then mounted his Bull, adjusting before him his sack well filled with gold, silver, and jewels. When the captain saw that they were all ready, he put himself at their head, and they rode off by the way they had come.

Scarli Tapa remained in the tree until the receding cloud of dust occasioned by the troop of robbers with their captain at their head, was no longer visible, and then came softly down and approached the door. Making use of the words that he had heard pronounced by the Captain of the Robbers, he said, after first piously strengthening himself with the remembrance of his deceased mother the Dowajah, Debrett's Peerage. Open Sesame! The door instantly flew wide open.

Scarli Tapa, who had expected to see a dull place, was surprised to find himself in an exceedingly agreeable vista of rooms, where everything was as light as possible, and where vast quantities of the finest wheaten loaves, and the richest gold and silver fishes, and all kinds of valuable possessions, were to be got for the laying hold of. Quickly loading himself with as much spoil as he could move under, he opened and closed the door as the Captain of the Robbers had done, and hurried away with his treasure to his poor home.

When the wife of Scarli Tapa saw her husband enter their dwelling after it was dark, and proceed to pile upon the floor a heap of wealth, she cried, Alas! husband, whom have you taken in, now? Be not alarmed, wife, returned Scarli Tapa, no one suffers but the public. And then told her how he, a poor relation, had made his way into Office by the magic words and had enriched himself.

There being more money and more loaves and fishes than they knew what to do with at the moment, the wife of Scarli Tapa, transported with joy, ran off to her sister-in-law, the wife of Cashim Tapa, who lived hard by, to borrow a Measure by means of which their property could be got into some order. The wife of Cashim Tapa looking into the measure when it was brought back, found at the bottom of it, several of the crumbs of fine loaves and of the scales of gold and silver fishes; upon which, flying into an envious rage, she thus addressed her husband: Wretched Cashim, you know you are of high birth as the eldest son of a Dowajah, and you think you are rich, but your despised younger brother, Scarli Tapa, is infinitely richer and more powerful than you. Judge of his wealth from these tokens. At the same time she showed him the measure.

Cashim, who since his marriage to the merchant's widow, had treated his brother coolly and held him at a distance, was at once fired with a burning desire to know how he had become rich. He was unable to sleep at night, and at the first streak of day, before the summons to morning prayers was heard from the minarets of the mosques, arose and went to his brother's house. Dear Scarli Tapa, said he, pretending to be very fraternal, what loaves and fishes are these that thou hast in thy possession? Scarli Tapa perceiving from this discourse that he could no longer keep his secret, communicated his discovery to his brother, who lost no time in providing all things necessary for the stowage of riches, and in repairing alone to the mysterious door near the Woods and Forests.

When night came, and Cashim Tapa did not return, his relatives became uneasy. His absence being prolonged for several days and nights, Scarli Tapa at length proceeded to the enchanted door in search of him. Opening it by the infallible means, what were his emotions to find that the robbers had encountered his brother within, and had quartered him upon the spot for ever!

Commander of the Faithful, when Scarli Tapa beheld the dismal spectacle of his brother everlastingly quartered upon Office for having merely uttered the magic words, Debrett's Peerage. Open Sesame! he was greatly troubled in his mind. Feeling the necessity of hushing the matter up, and putting the best face upon it for the family credit, he at once devised a plan to attain that object.

There was, in the House where his brother had sat himself down on his marriage with the merchant's daughter, a discreet slave whose name was Jobbiana. Though a kind of under secretary in the treasury department, she was very useful in the dirty work of the establishment, and had also some knowledge of the stables, and could assist the whippers-in at a pinch. Scarli Tapa, going home and taking the discreet slave aside, related to her how her master was quartered, and how it was now their business to disguise the fact, and deceive the neighbours. Jobbiana replied, To hear is to obey.

Accordingly, before day—for she always avoided daylight—the discreet slave went to a certain cobbler whom she knew, and found him sitting in his stall in the public street. Good morrow, friend, said she, putting a bribe into his hand, will you bring the tools of your trade and come to a House with me? Willingly, but what to do? replied the cobbler, who was a merry fellow. Nothing against my patriotism and conscience, I hope? (at which he laughed heartily). Not in the least, returned Jobbiana, giving him another bribe. But, you must go into the House blindfold and with your hands tied; you don't mind that for a job? I don't mind anything for a job, returned the cobbler with vivacity; I like a job. It is my business to job; only make it worth my while, and I am ready for any job you may please to name. At the same time he arose briskly. Jobbiana then imparted to him the quartering that had taken place, and that he was wanted to cobble the subject up and hide what had been done. Is that all? If it is no more than that, returned the cobbler, blind my eyes and tie my hands, and let us cobble away as long as you like!

Sire, the discreet slave blindfolded the cobbler, and tied his hands, and took him to the House; where he cobbled the subject up with so much skill, that she rewarded him munificently. We must now return to the Captain of the Robbers, whose name was Yawyawah, and whose soul was filled with perplexities and anxieties, when he visited the cave and found, from the state of the wheaten loaves and the gold and silver fishes, that there was yet another person who possessed the secret of the magic door.

Your majesty must know that Yawyawah, Captain of the Robbers (most of whose forefathers had been rebellious Genii, who never had had anything whatever to do with Solomon), sauntering through the city, in a highly disconsolate and languid state, chanced to come before daylight upon the cobbler working in his stall. Good morrow, honourable friend, said he, you job early. My Lord, returned the cobbler, I job early and late. You do well, observed the Captain of the Robbers; but, have you light enough? The less light the better, said the cobbler, for *my* work. Ay! returned Yawyawah; why so? Why so! repeated the cobbler, winking, because I can cobble certain businesses, best, in the dark. When the Captain of the Robbers heard him say this, he quickly understood the hint. He blindfolded him, and tied his hands, as the discreet slave had done, turned his coat, and led him away until he stopped at the House. This is the House that was concerned in the quartering and cobbling, said he. The captain set a mark upon it. But, Jobbiana coming by soon afterwards, and seeing what had been done, set exactly the same mark upon twenty other Houses in the same row. So that in truth they were all precisely alike, and one was marked by Jobbiana exactly as another was, and there was not a pin to choose between them.

Thus discomfited, the Captain of the Robbers called his troop together and addressed them. My noble, right honourable, honourable and gallant, honourable and learned, and simply honourable, friends, said he, it is apparent that we, the old band who for so many years have possessed the command of the magic door, are in danger of being superseded. In a word, it is clear that there are now two bands of robbers, and that we must overcome the opposition, or be ourselves vanquished. All the robbers applauded this sentiment. Therefore, said the captain, I will disguise myself as a trader—in the patriotic line of business—and will endeavour to prevail by stratagem. The robbers as with one voice approved of this design.

The Captain of the Robbers accordingly disguised himself as a trader of that sort which is called at the bazaars a patriot, and, having again had recourse to the cobbler, and having carefully observed the House, arranged his plans without delay. Feigning to be a dealer in soft-soap, he concealed his men in nine-and-thirty jars of that commodity, a man in every jar; and, loading a number of mules with this pretended merchandise, appeared at the head of his caravan one evening at the House, where Scarli Tapa was sitting on a bench in his usual place, taking it (as he generally did in the House) very coolly. My Lord, said the pretended trader, I am a stranger here, and know not where to bestow my merchandise for the night. Suffer me then, I beseech you, to warehouse it here. Scarli Tapa rose up, showed the pretended merchant where to put his goods, and instructed Jobbiana to prepare an entertainment for his guest. Also a bath for himself; his hands being very far from clean.

The discreet slave, in obedience to her orders, proceeded to prepare the entertainment and the bath; but was vexed to discover, when it was late and the shops of the dealers were all shut, that there was no soft-soap in the House—which was the more unexpected, as there was generally more than enough. Remembering, however, that the pretended trader had brought a large stock with him, she went to one of the jars to get a little. As she drew near to it, the impatient robber within, supposing it to be his leader, said in a low voice,—Is it time for our party to come in? Jobbiana, instantly comprehending the danger, replied, Not yet, but presently. She went in this manner to all the jars, receiving the same question, and giving the same answer.

The discreet slave returned into the kitchen, with her presence of mind not at all disturbed, and there prepared a lukewarm mess of soothing syrup, worn-out wigs, weak milk and water, poppy-heads, empty nut-shells, froth, and other similar ingredients. When it was sufficiently mawkish, she returned to the jars, bearing a large kettle filled with this mixture, poured some of it upon every robber, and threw the whole troop into a state of insensibility or submission. She then returned to the House, served up the entertainment, cleared away the fragments, and attired herself in a rich dress to dance before her master and his disguised visitor.

In the course of her dances, which were performed in the slowest time, and during which she blew both her own and the family trumpet with extraordinary pertinacity, Jobbiana took care always to approach nearer and still nearer to the Captain of the Robbers. At length she seized him by the sleeve of his disguise, disclosed him in his own dress to her master, and related where his men were, and how they had asked Was it time to come in? Scarli Tapa, so far from being angry with the pretended trader, fell upon his neck and addressed him in these friendly expressions: Since our object is the same and no great difference exists between us, O my brother, let us form a Coalition. Debrett's Peerage will open Sesame to the Scarli Tapas and the Yawyawahs equally, and will shut out the rest of mankind. Let it be so. There is plunder enough in the cave. So that it is never restored to the original owners and never gets into other hands but ours, why should we quarrel overmuch? The Captain made a suitable reply and embraced his entertainer. Jobbiana, shedding tears of joy, embraced them both.

Shortly afterwards, Scarli Tapa in gratitude to the wise Jobbiana, caused her to be invested with the freedom of the City—where she had been very much beloved for many years—and gave her in marriage to his own son. They had a large family and a powerful number of relations, who all inherited, by right of relationship, the power of opening Sesame and shutting it tight. The Yawyawahs became a very numerous tribe also, and exercised the same privilege. This, Commander of the Faithful, is the reason why, in that distant part of the dominions of the Sultan of the Indies, all true believers kiss the ground seven hundred and seventy-seven times on hearing the magic words, Debrett's Peerage—why the talisman of Office is always possessed in common by the three great races of the Scarli Tapas, the Yawyawahs, and the Jobbianas—why the public affairs, great and small, and all the national enterprises both by land and sea are conducted on a system which is the highest peak of the mountain of justice, and which always succeeds—why the people of that country are serenely satisfied with themselves and things in general, are unquestionably the envy of surrounding nations, and cannot fail in the inevitable order of events to flourish to the end of the world—why all these great truths are incontrovertible, and why all who dispute them receive the bastinado as atheists and rebels.

Here, Hansardadade concluded the story of the Forty Thieves, and said, If my Lord the Sultan will deign to hear another narrative from the lips of the lowest of his servants, I have adventures yet more surprising than these to relate: adventures that are worthy to be written in letters of gold. By Allah! exclaimed the Sultan, whose hand had been upon his scimetar several times during the previous recital, and whose eyes had menaced Parmarstoon until the soul of that Vizier had turned to water, what thou hast told but now, deserves to be recorded in letters of Brass!

Hansardadade was proceeding, Sire, in the great plain at the feet of the mountains of Casgar, which is seven weeks' journey across—when Brothartoon interrupted her: Sister, it is nearly daybreak, and if you are not asleep you ought to be. I pray you, dear sister, tell us at present no more of those stories that you know so well, but hold your tongue and go to bed. Hansardadade was silent, and the Sultan arose in a very indifferent humour and gloomily walked out—in great doubt whether he would let her live, on any consideration, over another day.

III

On the following night— Hansardadade proceeded with:

THE STORY OF THE TALKATIVE BARBER

In the great plain which lies at the feet of the mountains of Casgar, and which is seven weeks' journey across, there is a city where a lame young man was once invited, with other guests, to an entertainment. Upon his entrance, the company already assembled rose up to do him honour, and the host taking him by the hand invited him to sit down with the rest upon the estrade. At the same time the master of the house greeted his visitor with the salutation, Allah is Allah, there is no Allah but Allah, may his name be praised, and may Allah be with you!

Sire, the lame young man, who had the appearance of one that had suffered much, was about to comply with the invitation of the master of the house to seat himself upon the estrade with the rest of the company, when he suddenly perceived among them, a Barber. He instantly flew back with every token of abhorrence, and made towards the door. The master of the house, amazed at this behaviour, stopped him. Sir, exclaimed the young man, I adjure you by Mecca, do not stop me, let me go. I cannot without horror look upon that abominable Barber. Upon him and upon the whole of his relations be the curse of Allah, in return for all I have endured from his intolerable levity, and from his talk never being to the point or purpose! With these words, the lame young man again made violently towards the door. The guests were astonished at this behaviour, and began to have a very bad opinion of the Barber.

The master of the house so courteously entreated the lame young man to recount to the company the causes of this strong dislike, that at length he could not refuse. Averting his head so that he might not see the Barber, he proceeded. Gentlemen, you must know that this accursed Barber is the cause of my being crippled, and is the occasion of all my misfortunes. I became acquainted with him in the following manner.

I am called Publeek, or The Many Headed. I am one of a large family, who have undergone an infinite variety of adventures and afflictions. One day, I chanced to sit down to rest on a seat in a narrow lane, when a lattice over against me opened, and I obtained a glimpse of the most ravishing Beauty in the world. After watering a pot of budding flowers which stood in the window, she perceived me and modestly withdrew; but, not before she had directed towards me a glance so full of charms, that I screamed aloud with love and became insensible for a considerable time.

When I came to myself, I directed a favourite slave to make enquiries among the neighbours, and, on pain of death, to bring me an exact account of the young lady's family and condition. The slave acquitted himself so well, that he informed me within an hour that the young lady's name was Fair Guvawnment, and that she was the daughter of the chief Cadi. The violence of my passion became so great that I took to my bed that evening, fell into a fever, and was reduced to the brink of death, when an old lady of my acquaintance came to see me. Son, said she, after observing me attentively, I perceive that your disease is love. Inform me who is the object of your affections, and rely upon me to bring you together. This address of the good old lady's had such an effect upon me, that I immediately arose quite restored in health, and began to dress myself.

In a word (continued the lame young man, addressing the company assembled in the house of the citizen of the plain at the feet of the mountains of Casgar, and always keeping his head in such a position as that he could not see the Barber), the old lady exerted herself in my behalf with such effect, that on the very next day she returned, commissioned by the enchantress of my soul to appoint a meeting between us. I arranged to attire myself in my richest clothes, and dispatched the same favourite slave with instructions to fetch a Barber, who knew his business, and who could skilfully prepare me for the interview I was to have, for the first time in all my life, with Fair Guvawnment. Gentlemen, the slave returned with the wretch whom you see here.

Sir, began this accursed Barber whom a malignant destiny thus inflicted on me, how do you do, I hope you are pretty well. I do not wish to praise myself, but you are lucky to have sent for me. My name is Praymiah. In me you behold an accomplished diplomatist, a first-rate statesman, a frisky speaker, an easy shaver, a touch-and-go joker, a giver of the go-by to all complainers, and above all a member of the aristocracy of Barbers. Sir, I am a lineal descendant of the Prophet, and consequently a born Barber. All my relations, friends, acquaintances, connexions, and associates, are likewise lineal descendants of the Prophet, and consequently born Barbers every one. As I said, but the other day, to Layardeen, or the Troublesome, the aristocracy—May Allah confound thy aristocracy and thee! cried I, will you begin to shave me?

Gentlemen (proceeded the lame young man), the Barber had brought a showy case with him, and he consumed such an immense time in pretending to open it, that I was well nigh fretted to death. I will not be shaved at all, said I. Sir, returned the unabashed Barber, you sent for me to shave you, and with your pardon I will do it, whether you like it or not. Ah, Sir! you have not so good an opinion of me as your father had. I knew your father, and he appreciated me. I said a thousand pleasant things to him, and rendered him a thousand services, and he adored me. Just Heaven, he would exclaim, you are an inexhaustible fountain of wisdom, no man cam plumb the depth of your profundity! My dear Sir, I would reply, you do me more honour than I deserve. Still, as a lineal descendant of the Prophet, and one of the aristocracy of born Barbers, I will, with the help of Allah, shave you pretty close before I have done with you.

You may guess, gentlemen, in my state of expectancy, with my heart set on Fair Guvawnment, and the precious time running by, how I cursed this impertinent chattering on the part of the Barber. Barber of mischief, Barber of sin, Barber of false pretence, Barber of froth and bubble, said I, stamping my foot upon the ground, will you begin to do your work? Fair and softly, Sir, said he, let me count you out first. With that, he counted from one up to thirty-eight with great deliberation, and then laughed heartily and went out to look at the weather.

When the Barber returned, he went on prattling as before. You are in high feather, Sir, said he. I am glad to see you look so well. But, how can you be otherwise than flourishing, after having sent for *me*! I am called the Careless. I am not like Dizzee, who draws blood; nor like Darbee, who claps on blisters; nor like Johnnee, who works with the square and rule; I am the easy shaver, and I care for nobody, I can do anything. Shall I dance the dance of Mistapit to please you, or shall I sing the song of Mistafoks, or joke the joke of Jomillah? Honour me with your attention while I do all three.

The Barber (continued the lame young man, with a groan), danced the dance of Mistapit, and sang the song of Mistafoks, and joked the joked of Jomillah, and then began with fresh impertinences. Sir, said he, with a lofty flourish, when Britteen first at Heaven's command, arose from out the azure main, this was the charter of the land, and guardian angels sang this strain: Singing, as First Lord was a wallerking the Office-garding around, no end of born Barbers he picked up and found, Says he I will load them with silvier and gold, for the country's a donkey, and as such is sold.—At this point I could bear his insolence no longer, but starting up, cried, Barber of hollowness, by what consideration am I restrained from falling upon and strangling thee? Calmly, Sir, said he, let me count you out first. He then played his former game of counting from one to under forty, and again laughed heartily, and went out to take the height of the sun, and make a calculation of the state of the wind, that he might know whether it was an auspicious time to begin to shave me.

I took the opportunity (said the young man) of flying from my house so darkened by the fatal presence of this detestable Barber, and of repairing with my utmost speed to the house of the Cadi. But, the appointed hour was long past, and Fair Guvawnment had withdrawn no one knew whither. As I stood in the street cursing my evil destiny and execrating this intolerable Barber, I heard a hue and cry. Looking in the direction whence it came, I saw the diabolical Barber, attended by an immense troop of his relations and friends, the lineal descendants of the Prophet and aristocracy of born Barbers, all offering a reward to any one who would stop me, and all proclaiming the unhappy Publeek to be their natural prey and rightful property. I turned and fled. They jostled and bruised me cruelly among them, and I became maimed, as you see. I utterly detest, abominate, and abjure this Barber, and ever since and evermore I totally renounce him. With these concluding words, the lame young man arose in a sullen way that had something very threatening in it, and left the company.

Commander of the Faithful, when the lame young man was gone, the guests, turning to the Barber, who wore his turban very much on one side and smiled complacently, asked him what he had to say for himself? The Barber immediately danced the dance of Mistapit, and sang the song of Mistafoks, and joked the joke of Jomillah. Gentlemen, said he, not at all out of breath after these performances, it is true that I am called the Careless; permit me to recount to you, as a lively diversion, what happened to a twin-brother of that young man who has so undeservedly abused me, in connexion with a near relation of mine. No one objecting, the Barber related:

THE STORY OF THE BARMECIDE FEAST

The young man's twin-brother, Guld Publeek, was in very poor circumstances and hardly knew how to live. In his reduced condition he was fain to go about to great men, begging them to take him in—and to do them justice, they did it extensively.

One day in the course of his poverty-stricken wanderings, he came to a large house with two high towers, a spacious hall, and abundance of fine gilding, statuary, and painting. Although the house was far from finished, he could see enough to assure him that enormous sums of money must be lavished upon it. He inquired who was the master of this wealthy mansion, and received for information that he was a certain Barmecide. (The Barmecide, gentlemen, is my near relation, and, like myself, a lineal descendant of the Prophet, and a born Barber.)

The young man's twin brother passed through the gateway, and crept submissively onward, until he came into a spacious apartment, where he descried the Barmecide sitting at the upper end in the post of honour. The Barmecide asked the young man's brother what he wanted? My Lord, replied he, in a pitiful tone, I am sore distressed, and have none but high and mighty nobles like yourself, to help me. That much at least is true, returned the Barmecide, there is no help save in high and mighty nobles, it is the appointment of Allah. But, what is your distress? My Lord, said the young man's brother, I am fasting from all the nourishment I want, and—whatever you may please to think—am in a dangerous extremity. A very little more at any moment, and you would be astonished at the figure I should make. Is it so, indeed? inquired the Barmecide. Sir, returned the young man's brother, I swear by Heaven and Earth that it is so, and Heaven and Earth are every hour drawing nearer to the discovery that it is so. Alas, poor man! replied the Barmecide, pretending to have an interest in him. Ho, boy! Bring us of the best here and let us not spare our liberal measures. This poor man shall make good cheer without delay.

Though no boy appeared, gentlemen, and though there was no sign of the liberal measures of which the Barmecide spoke so ostentatiously, the young man's brother, Guld Publeek, endeavoured to fall in with the Barmecide's humour. Come! cried the Barmecide, feigning to pour water on his hands, let us begin fair and fresh. How do you like this purity? Ah, my Lord, returned Guld Publeek, imitating the Barmecide's action, this is indeed purity: this is in truth a delicious beginning. Then let us proceed, said the Barmecide, seeming to dry his hands, with this smoking dish of Reefawm. How do you like it? Fat? At the same time he pretended to hand choice morsels to the young man's brother. Take your fill of it, exclaimed the Barmecide, there is plenty here, do not spare it, it was cooked for you. May Allah prolong your life, my Lord, said Guld Publeek, you are liberal indeed!

The Barmecide having boasted in this pleasant way of his smoking dish of Reefawm, which had no existence, affected to call for another dish. Ho! cried he, clapping his hands, bring in those Educational Kabobs. Then, he imitated the action of putting some upon the plate of the young man's brother, and went on. How do you like these Educational Kabobs? The cook who made them is a treasure. Are they not justly seasoned? Are they not so honestly made, as to be adapted to all digestions? You want them very much, I know, and have wanted them this long time. Do you enjoy them? And here is a delicious mess, called Foreen Leejun. Eat of it also, for I pride myself upon it, and expect it to bring me great respect and much friendship from distant lands. And this pillau of Church-endowments-and-duties, which you see so beautifully divided, pray how do you approve of this pillau? It was invented on your account, and no expense has been spared to render it to your taste. Ho, boy, bring in that ragout! Now here, my friend, is a ragout, called Law-of-Partnership. It is expressly made for poor men's eating, and I particularly pride myself upon it. This is indeed a dish at which you may cut and come again. And boy! hasten to set before my good friend, Guld Publeek, the rare stew of colonial spices, minced crime, hashed poverty, swollen liver of ignorance, stale confusion, rotten tape, and chopped-up bombast, steeped in official sauce, and garnished with a great deal of tongue and a very little brains—the crowning dish, of which my dear friend never can have enough, and upon which he thrives so well! But, you don't eat with an appetite, my brother, said the Barmecide. I fear the repast is hardly to your liking? Pardon me, my benefactor, returned the guest, whose jaws ached with pretending to eat, I am full almost to the throat.

Well then, said the Barmecide, since you have dined so well, try the dessert. Here are apples of discord from the Horse Guards and Admiralty, here is abundance of the famous fruit from the Dead Sea that turns to ashes on the lips, here are dates from the Peninsula in great profusion, and here is a fig for the nation. Eat and be happy! My Lord, replied the object of his merriment, I am quite worn out by your liberality, and can bear no more.

Gentlemen (continued the loquacious Barber), when the humorous Barmecide, my near relation lineally descended from the Prophet, had brought his guest to this pass, he clapped his hands three times to summon around him his slaves, and instructed them to force in reality the vile stew of which he had spoken down the throat of the hungry Guld Publeek, together with a nauseous mess called DUBLINCUMTAX, and to put bitters in his drink, strew dust on his head, blacken his face, shave his eyebrows, pluck away his beard, insult him and make merry with him. He then caused him to be attired in a shameful dress and set upon an ass with his face to the tail, and in this state to be publicly exposed with the inscription round his neck, This is the punishment of Guld Publeek who asked for nourishment and said he wanted it. Such is the present droll condition of this person; while my near relation, the Barmecide, sits in the post of honour with his turban very much on one side, enjoying the joke. Which I think you will all admit is an excellent one.

Hansardadade having made an end of the discourse of the loquacious Barber, would have instantly begun another story, had not Brothartoon shut her up with, Dear Sister, it will be shortly daybreak. Get to bed and be quiet.

STORES FOR THE FIRST OF APRIL

All Fools'-day drawing near, it is a seasonable occupation to calculate what we have in store for the occasion, and to take stock of the provision in reserve, to meet the great demand of the anniversary.

First (for the moment postponing the substantials of the annual feast, and beginning with the spirits), we are happy to report the existence in England, in its third volume, of a Spiritual Telegraph "and British Harmonial Advocate." Walled up in the flesh, as it is our personal and peculiar misfortune to be, we are not in a condition to report upon the derivation or meaning of the British adjective, Harmonial. Unknown to Dr. Johnson in the body, it has probably been revealed to him in the spirit, and by him been communicated to some favoured "Medium." The Harmonial Advocate is published in one of the northern counties erewhile renowned for horses, and which may yet be destined to establish a celebrity for its acquaintance with another class of quadrupeds.

In the January Harmonial, we find a Bank for the First of April, on which we will present our readers with a few small drafts, which may enable them to form a proximate idea of the value of its Rest. Its following extract from "the British Court Journal," of this last blessed eighteen hundred and fifty-sixth Christmas-time, will show how far we have travelled in all those years.

"One of our greatest English poets being in communication with the medium, asked for the summons of Dante. The presence of the latter was immediately made manifest by the written answers returned to the questions of the inquirer, and Mr. B—— then asked the medium to request the great Italian to make himself visible! Presently there arose, as if from the ground beneath the table, two long, thin, yellow hands, unmistakable as to their Italian origin, undeniable as to their having belonged to a student and a gentleman. While the assembly were yet gazing in breathless awe, and may be something of terror likewise, the hands floated away, or were rather borne, as it were, across the room, and rose to the marble console opposite, upon which stood a vase containing an orange tree in blossom. The hands slowly and softly, without noise, but visibly to all, plucked from the stem a sprig of orange flower with its leaves and buds, and returning to the table, paused above the head of Mrs. B——, the poet's wife, herself an exquisite and beautiful poet likewise, and, placing the sprig upon her raven hair, disappeared gradually from sight, seeming once more to sink to the floor, while the audience remained speechless and awe-struck, and but little inclined to renew the experiment, that same night, at all events.

The sprig of orange blossom is religiously preserved by Mrs. B——, whose honour and truth are unimpeachable; while the witnesses gathered round the table at the time of the occurrence all testify to the apparition, as well as to the utter unconsciousness of the medium, who neither spoke nor moved during the whole time the circumstance was taking place."—

We happen to have had communicated to our humble bodily individuality by a letter of the alphabet, remarkably like B, some emphatic references to a similar story; and they were not merely associated with the production of two hands, but with the threatened production of one foot—the latter not a spiritual, but a corporeal foot considered as a means of impelling the biped, Man, down a staircase.

We learn from the same pages that Mr. J. J. of Peckham, went into an appointed house at Sandgate-by-the-Sea, last autumn, at four of the clock in the afternoon, and into him entered the Medium, evidently suffering from "physical prostration"; spiritual knockings immediately afterwards hailed the advent of J. J., and in answer to the question, Were the spirits pleased with Mr. J. J. of Peckham being there? "the rappings, as if on the under-side of the table, were rapid and joyous, and as loud as if made with a hand-hammer"; being probably made, we would deferentially suggest, by the ghost of the celebrated "Harmonial" blacksmith. In the evening a loo-table politely expressed its happiness in making the acquaintance of the visitor from Peckham, by suspending itself in the air "clear of the floor, about eight inches." On another occasion, a lady of London, attending her uncle during his last illness, was gratified by a spectacle such as has been hitherto hidden from the ardent desires of the best of mankind, and saw her uncle "floating out from under the bedclothes," accompanied by two angels with whom he floated out of window, "and continued to float and rise till out of sight." This lady is described as Mrs. G., and may, perhaps, have been Mrs. Gamp, in professional attendance on the late Mr. Harris. On another occasion, Mr. J. G. had the following little experience: "One evening, after having seen a great many extraordinary lifts, by the table frequently springing from the floor to a great height, and in that manner keeping time to tunes, etc., *with an understanding that the performer was the Spirit of Burns the poet*, the company had nearly all retired, leaving only the medium, her father, and myself at the table, when finally the father fell asleep, and the medium retired to a distance from the table, leaving me alone sitting at the table reading Burns's Poems, by the light of a candle placed on the middle of the table ; I was just in the act of reading the song called Wandering Willie, and was making a remark to the medium that it was an old favourite of mine when I heard a movement, and the medium said, "the table is moving of its own accord." I instantly stopped reading, and having heard of tables moving without touch, I thought I might perhaps be gratified with a movement of that kind. I therefore said, "*If this is really the Spirit of Burns, will he be kind enough to gratify me by a movement of the table without any human touch*?" Almost immediately afterwards, it commenced cracking as if a heavy weight had been pressing upon it, and it then gave a sudden rush on the floor, perhaps to the distance of a foot, when it stopped." On another occasion the same gentleman saw "a very heavy oak-table, weighing some few stones, fly up *like a rocket*," and heard a lady make the singular request to her husband's spirit, that he would, as a particular favour, "throw" this heavy oak table, weighing some few stones, "over on her knee," and "upset it into her lap." These extraordinary proofs of a love surviving beyond the grave, her husband affectionately accorded, but with what painful results to the lady's legs is not mentioned. On another occasion Mrs. Coan, Medium, was tested by "the New York Philosophical Society of the Mechanics' Institution," when a Spirit made the following startling disclosure: "Did you leave a wife? Yes.—Did you leave children? No answer.—Did you leave a child? Yes.—Was it a girl? No.—*Was it a boy*? Yes."

Mr. Robert Owen, who, as was formerly announced in this journal, received a special message from the spiritual world informing him that he would certainly succeed in his object of re-modelling society, if he inserted an advertisement in the *Morning Post*, has made large provision for the First of April. It is at present stored in a warehouse called the *Millennial Gazette*, established for the purpose of proclaiming to mankind that "A CONGRESS of the advanced minds of the world, to consider the best immediate practicable mode of gradually superseding the false, ignorant, unjust, cruel, wicked, and most irrational system of society, opposed to the righteous laws of God and nature, and which hitherto has been the only system known to man, —by the true, enlightened, just, merciful, good, and rational system of society, in strict accordance with the all-wise laws of God and nature, will be opened at noon precisely, on the fourteenth of May next, in St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, London, the present metropolis of the world—when will be explained the outline of the change which is highly to benefit all the human race through futurity, and to injure none, even while passing through its first or transition generation, preliminary to the attainment of its full change, which will be the commencement of the long-promised millennium."

It is foreseen that the debates of this assemblage (to which Mr. Owen invites "the Sovereign Powers of the civilised world to send their most talented representatives, possessing firm integrity of character"—who will no doubt attend in great numbers) will take time. It is therefore announced that the Congress "will be continued day by day, from ten a.m. to three p.m., until this great work of reformation for the lasting advantage of all of humankind shall be brought to a satisfactory termination." We fear this may cause Mr. Hullah some little inconvenience; but, it is pleasant to consider, on the other hand, what an enormous amount of rent that respected gentleman will receive for the long occupation of his Hall. "Superior spirits," it appears, are taking great interest in the Congress, and among the mortals who will attend, we hope Mr. Samuel Clark, Medium, of "Beaverton, Boone Co., Ill., U.S." may be expected.

This gentleman writes to the convener: "Dear Sir, I never heard your name nor the right foundation of the principles that you are advocating to the world until a few weeks ago I came into my house at noon and there lay your *Millennial Gazette*, but the cover not removed, and as I took it into my hand to open it a divine spiritual influence dropt over me, as if a mantle of light and harmony was cast over me by some invisible power. It vibrated through my entire system, and by that I knew I held something holy and true in my hand. I opened and great was my delight there to find the principles plainly laid before me, which I had been trying to advocate in public for some time past, with spiritualism combined, having been a medium some ten months, speaking in public, *languages that I do not understand, and sometimes no person present understood not even one word*. I have seen spirits and had them touch me, have seen the most beautiful visions, and healed the sick by laying on of hand by the same invisible power." Mr. Clark sends likewise this apostrophe from Beaverton, Boone Co., Ill., U.S.: "But I should love to see and hear thee, oh thou noble champion of truth. One favour I ask. If you are taken to the purer spiritual life before me, then throw thy holy influence on me, to convince the sceptical, and to help me speak the truth, impress me with your ideas. This you can do on a medium, by and through the laws of unity which exist between individual spirits of pure harmony."

There appears to be no doubt that important communications from this gentleman may be confidently expected (in the language of which nobody understands one word), on the First of April.

Dismissing, here, this branch of the preparations for the feast of unreason, we pass to a joke happily conceived for the First of April, though we doubt its success in making as complete a fool of the British Public as is desired. An old captain of the Welsh Fusileers has translated into French and published at Brussels, for the edification and something-else-ification of the French people, a paper originally written by Mr. Hayward for an English Review, and therein published in the English tongue. Mr. Hayward is correctly described in the Preface as " Queen's Counsel, and distinguished man of letters"; and he is further described as having, for the purposes of the translation, corrected his work, and enlarged it with a variety of information drawn from the most authentic sources. Its object is to show that the English people had, in the beginning, the most exaggerated expectations of the war with Russia; that they were fully persuaded that everything would go on of itself (que tout marcherait tout seul), though we suppose they may be allowed to have had some dim impression, at least, that a vast amount of their money would go off in helping it on; that nearly all the privations and sufferings of the English army "may be accounted for without imputing any serious blame to any minister, civil or military officer, or chief of department, whether in London or whether in the Crimea"; and that "nobody of good faith who is acquainted with the spirited reply of Lord Lucan (!), who has read the lucid address of Sir Richard Airey (!), or who has studied the extraordinary evidence of Colonel Tulloch before the Chelsea commission (!), will hesitate to pronounce a sentence of honourable acquittal." The sufficient cause and reason of any little British failure (if any) that ill-conditioned journalists pretended to observe in the Crimea, and of any slight superfluous suffering and death (if any) that occurred among the British troops is to be found in the alterations rendered necessary in the character of the army's operations, after those operations were arranged at Varna, and in the remissness of the French; the soldiers of which distracted nation (with the occasional exception of a Zouave or so) were never ready, were always behind time, were not to be relied upon, and were handled by their generals with timidity and incertitude. M. de Bazancourt having, with the not very generous concurrence of his master the Emperor, written a turbid, inflated, and partial account of the War in the Crimea (which, making every allowance for a Frenchman's not being specially predestined to write in the style of the Duke of Wellington, he has indisputably done), Mr. Hayward sets the matter right, and brings the French mind to a perfect understanding of the truth, by means of these lights and explanations (éclaircissements) on the subject.

It happens, however—perversely, with a view to the First of April—that Colonel Tulloch, who seems to have no relish for All Fools'-day, and no perception of the humour of the jokes appropriate to it, comes out arrayed in plain English attire, at about the same time as Mr. Hayward appears in his French suit, and offers *his* little lights and explanations on the same subject. Colonel Tulloch's "éclaircissements" are contained in a Review of the Proceedings and Report of the Chelsea Board; and they incontestably prove, beyond the power of disproof by man of woman born, every conceivable detail of murderous muddle and mismanagement, by English administrators of one kind or another in the Crimea, on every imaginable head on which it was possible to do wrong, from the article of coatees up to hospital medicines and down again to coffee. They prove these imbecilities, too, out of the lips of his own opponents, making their own statements in their own defence before a one-sided tribunal constantly wresting the case out of the truth, by stopping short when they see that damnatory pea in danger of rolling out from among the thimbles. Whether Colonel Tulloch shows the spirited replyer, Lord Lucan, to have called cavalry officers to prove that nothing more could have been done than was done towards the sheltering of the horses, whom he had himself in writing, under his own hand, severely censured for "doing nothing" towards that sheltering for five long winter weeks; whether he shows that in the Crimea the same noble and spirited replyer would not hear of sail-cloth for the covering-in of horses, and that at Aldershot it is now extensively used for that very purpose; or whether he shows that the vast idea never presented itself to the collective wisdom of a whole brigade in want of barley, that it was possible, instead of sending horses all the way to Balaclava to fetch it, to send them half the way, and there let them meet the commissariat beasts, relieve them of their load, and turn back again; or whether he shows the English soldiers to have been perishing by thousands, abject scarecrows in rags that would not hold together, "while their knapsacks were on the Black Sea, their squad-bags at Scutari, thousands of pairs of trousers missing, thousands of coatees unused, and tens of thousands of great-coats, blankets, and rugs, filling the Quarter-Master General's stores, or the harbour of Balaclava"; or whether he shows the Board to attribute the non-supply of those vital essentials, to the deficiency of transport to the front, whereas that very kind of transport was at that very time going on with shot and shell and the like to an enormous extent, and whereas Sir John Campbell and Sir Richard England both positively stated to the Board, that they had never received any intimation whatever from the Quarter-Master General, that such things were to be got for the sending for, or were there at all; or whether he shows it to be alleged as a reason for not issuing coatees to the men, that they were too small, "by reason of the great quantity of under-clothing worn by them," at a time when the identical men are to a dead certainty known to have had no under-clothing whatever; or whether he shows the Assistant Commissary General's accounts to pretend that within a certain time three hundred and fifty thousand pounds weight (in round numbers), of vegetables were issued to the starving troops, of which quantity two hundred and seventy-three thousand pounds weight (in round numbers), are afterwards admitted *to have been destroyed*, while the greater part of the rest was scrambled for in Balaclava harbour and never issued; or whether he shows that when the Chelsea Board compassionate the Commissary General for having no transports to get fresh meat in, while the soldiers were dying of diseases caused by salt meat, there were Sixteen available transports lying idle at their moorings in Balaclava harbour; or whether he shows the same Commissary when the men were dying for want of lime-juice, never to have reported to Lord Raglan that there was the small item of twenty thousand pounds weight of lime-juice stored there, in the Crimea, on the spot, ready for use; or whether he shows the Chelsea Board in their Report, after all the mischief is done and all the misery is irreparable, to be still, to the last, so like their own championed Incapables, as, in their printed report, to be found quoting evidence that was never given, and assigning explanations to witnesses who never offered them; in whatever he does from the first to the last page of his Review of a Board whose constitution and proceedings were an outrage on common sense, the lights of Colonel Tulloch make the lights of Mr. Hayward darkness, rout the whole host of spirited replyers with frightful loss and discomfiture, and show no toleration whatever of the First of April.

To us, who admire that institution, and love to contemplate the provision made and making for it, this is no service. We regard Colonel Tulloch as rather a dull man, wanting the due zest and relish for a joke, and conscious of no compunction in knocking a choice one on the head. Yet we descry a kind of humour in him, too, when he quotes this letter from the late Duke of Wellington to General Fane.

"I wish I had it in my power to give you well-clothed troops, or to hang those who ought to have given them their clothing.
"Believe me, etc.,
"WELLINGTON."

—which is really an "éclaircissement" extremely satisfactory to our odd way of thinking, and perhaps the next spirited reply on record after Lord Lucan's.

Consenting, in the good humour with which this pithy document inspires us, to consider Colonel Tulloch reconciled to the First of April, we will pass to a cursory examination of some more of its stores.

A contribution to the general stock, of a rather remarkable nature, has been made by the reverend Ordinary of Newgate, in his report to the Lord Mayor and court of aldermen, as we find it quoted in the *Times* of Wednesday the eleventh of February. The reverend gentleman writes (in singular English):

"I have often thought, and still think, that the origin of garotte robberies took place from the exhibition of the way the Thugs in India strangle and plunder passengers, as exhibited in the British Museum. However valuable as illustrations of Indian manners such representations may be, I could heartily wish that these models were placed in some more obscure position, and cease to be that which I fear they have been, the means of giving to men addicted to crime and violence an idea how their evil purposes may be accomplished."

Now, setting aside the fact notorious to all men—on the first of April—that the desperate characters of the metropolis are in the habit of fatiguing themselves with the study of the British Museum, and that the worst of the Ticket-of-leave men may be invariably found there, between the hours of ten and four, annotating their catalogues with great diligence, we take leave to protest against this reverend gentleman's doctrine, as utterly nonsensical in itself, and surpassingly insulting to the people. Here indeed is our old enemy Sloggins, with the broken nose, the black eye, and the bull-dog, at his old work in a rampant state! Because Sloggins abuses, nobody shall use. There is habitual drunkenness in the house of Sloggins, and therefore there shall not be temperate enjoyment in the house of Moderation; there is perversion of every gift of a gracious Creator on the part of this beast, and therefore the gifts shall be taken away from a million of well-conducted people. We declare that we believe the cruelty (however unintentional) of the reverend gentleman's proposition to be as gigantic as its injustice. It is a striking illustration of the purblind, one-sided, left-handed, monomaniacal vice of the time, which, deferring to the pests of society, would make England, for its toiling and much-enduring honest masses, one vast Penitentiary. Of what entertainment, of what knowledge, of what artificial relief that this earth can afford them, may the people out of Newgate not be deprived by a parity of reasoning? All traces of Mr. Layard's discoveries must be instantly put out of the way. They shew the Ordinary's precious charges how to bind people's hands behind their backs, and how to lop off people's heads. Peter's part in the New Testament must be sealed up, or we shall have a policeman's ear cut off. *Romeo and Juliet* must be interdicted, in remembrance of Mr. Palmer's having purchased poison, and lest Mr. Sloggins should think of administering a sleeping-draught. The publication of *King Lear* must be stopped by the Attorney-General, or a fiendish way of plotting against his brother will inevitably be put into young Mr. Sloggins's head. Tolerate *Hamlet* again, on any stage, and you shall hear from the Ordinary of there being somebody "in trouble," on suspicion of having poured poison into the ear of a near relation. The *Merchant of Venice* must be got with all dispatch into the State Gazette, or, so sure as you are born, Mr. Sloggins will have a pound of flesh from you as you go home one night. Prohibit *Paradise Lost* without a moment's loss of time, or Mr. Sloggins will get all the arguments of the Evil One into his head, and will misquote them against the Ordinary himself before he is a Sessions older. Burns must not be heard; Hogarth must not be seen. Sloggins never had a holiday that he did not misuse; therefore let no man have a holiday any more. Sloggins would raise a Devil out of any Art or Grace in life; therefore hamstring all the Arts and Graces, and lock the cripples up. Yet, even when you have done all this, and have cast the Thug figures into impenetrable obscurity, so ingenious is Mr. Sloggins, and such a knack of distorting the purest models has that exacting gentleman, that who shall ensure the Ordinary, after all, against Mr. Sloggins's declaring, one fine First of April, that "he bin and got the idea o' garrotin'," from a certain lawful procession at eight o'clock in the morning, in which the Ordinary himself formed a conspicuous figure!

Among the commodities in store for All Fool's-day, we find a large quantity of expectations. It is expected to be known, then, by whose authority comfortable little arrangements are made for the absence of the Police when the worst characters in London come together to describe the Police as their natural and implacable enemies—which, it is to be hoped, they will long remain. It is expected to be known, then (and that through the agency of some Member of Parliament), whether the managing Police Commissioner takes the responsibility of this very dangerous proceeding, or whether the Home Secretary takes it; and whether the responsibility of either functionary is a sufficient justification of it. On the same occasion it is expected that Somebody (official) will rise in both houses of Parliament, with a plain speech to this effect: "We hear, my lords and gentlemen, a great deal said about youthful profligacy and corruption, in search of which we are perpetually poking our heads into Singing Rooms and Acting Rooms, and where not, and worrying mankind grey with the shying and backing and jibbing of a variety of hobbies; but, at any rate, we may all know, through the evidence of our own ears, that one of the most prolific sources of that profligacy and corruption is always rife and unchecked in our streets: where more abominable language is currently and openly used chiefly by young boys and young men than in all the rest of Europe. Now, my lords and gentlemen, we have the remedy for this, ready made, in the last Police Bill, where the use of bad language, in any public place, is made an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment. And, to begin plainly, at the beginning, without any prancing of hobbies in circles, we have just come to the conclusion that this law shall not be suffered to remain a Dead Letter, but shall, on special instruction, be enforced by the Police; and so, with God's help and yours, we will, at least, shut one of the stable-doors, standing wide open in our full view, before the steed is stolen."[1] On the same occasion, the same Somebody (still speaking officially) is expected to announce, within the compass of half an hour by the clock, that he holds in his hand a Bill for the taking into custody by the strong arm, of every neglected or abandoned child of either sex, found in the streets of any town in this kingdom; for the training and education of that child, in honest knowledge and honest labour; for the heavy punishment of the parents if they can by any means be found; for making it compulsory on them to contribute to the costs and charges of the rearing of those children out of their earnings, no matter what; but, for their summary and final deprivation of all rights, as parents, over the young creatures they would have driven to perdition; and for the transfer of those rights to the State. It is expected that the Preamble of such Bill will set forth that the human heart can no longer bear the affecting spectacle of beautiful childhood made repulsive and shocking, which every great town presents; and that human faith cannot believe in the Divine endurance of such iniquity as the standing by and looking at it, without a terrible retribution.

It is further expected that the subject will occasion half as much interest at Westminster, and draw half as full a Lower House, as a pitched battle of "I say you did" and "I say you didn't" between M. and N., or as the appearance arm-in-arm, instead of fist to fist, of A. and Z. This extravagant notion, as by far the greatest of all the extravagances we have recorded, may aptly close the list of Stores for the Day of All Fools.

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[1] The writer has himself obtained a conviction by a police magistrate, under this Act, for this shameful and demoralising offence—which is as common and as public as the mud in the streets. He obtained it with difficulty, the charge not being within the experience of any one concerned; but, he insisted on the law, and it was clear (wonderful to relate!) and was enforced.

THE BEST AUTHORITY

I WISH he was not so ubiquitous.

I wish he was not always having people to dine with him, into whom he crams all manner of confidences, and who come from his too hospitable board to harass my soul with special intelligence (which is never true), upon all the subjects that arise in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I wish to Heaven he would dine out!

Yet, that is a weak wish, because he does dine out. He makes a habit of dining out. He is always dining out. How could I be the confused, perplexed, benighted wretch I am, but for everybody I know, meeting him at dinner everywhere, and receiving information from him which they impart to me? I wish he would hold his tongue!

Yet, that is another weak wish, because when he does hold his tongue, I am none the better for it. His silence is used against me. If I mention to my friend, Pottington, any little scrap of fact of which in my very humble way I may have become possessed, Pottington says, that's very odd, he hardly thinks it can be, he will tell me why; dining yesterday at Croxford's he happened to sit next to the Best Authority, and had a good deal of talk with him, and yet he never said a word to lead him to suppose—

This brings me to inquire how does it happen that everybody always sits next him? At a dinner of eighteen persons, I have known seventeen sit next him. Nay, at a public dinner of one hundred and thirty, I have known one hundred and twenty-nine sit next him. How is it done? In his ardent desire to impart special intelligence to his fellow-men, does he shift his position constantly, and sit upon all the chairs in the social circle successively? If he does so, it is obvious that he has no moral right to represent to each individual member of the company that his communication is of an exclusive character, and that he is impelled to it by strong personal consideration and respect. Yet I find that he invariably makes some such representation. I augur from this, that he is a deceiver.

What is his calling in life, that it leaves him so much time upon his hands? He is always at all the clubs—must spend a respectable income in annual club subscriptions alone. He is always in all the streets, and is met in the market-places by all sorts and conditions of men. Who is his bootmaker? Who cuts his corns? He is always going up and down the pavements, and must have corns of a prodigious size.

I object to his being addicted to compliments and flattery. I boldly publish this accusation against him, because I have several respected friends who would scorn to compliment themselves, whom he is always complimenting. For example. He meets my dear Flounceby (whom I regard as a brother), at a mutual friend's—there again! He is mutual friends with everybody!—and I find that he prefaces his communications to Flounceby, with such expressions as these: "Mr. Flounceby, I do not wish what I am about to mention, to go any further; it is a matter of some little delicacy which I should not consider myself justified in speaking of to general society; but, knowing your remarkable powers, your delicate discrimination, and great discretion," etc. All of which, my dear Flounceby, in the modest truthfulness of his nature, feels constrained to repeat to me! This is the Best Authority's didactic style; but, I observe him also, by incidental strokes, artfully to convey complimentary touches of character into casual dialogue. As when he remarks, in reference to some handsome reticence on my friend's part, "Ah Flounceby! Your usual reserve in committing others!" Or, "Your expressive eye, my dear Mr. Flounceby, discloses what your honourable tongue would desire to conceal!" And the like. All of which, Flounceby, in his severe determination to convey to me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, repeats, with evident pain to his modesty.

Is he a burglar, or of the swell mob? I do not accuse him of occupying either position (which would be libellous), but I ask for information. Because my mind is tormented by his perpetually getting into houses into which he would seem to have no lawful open way, and by his continually diving into people's pocket-books in an otherwise inexplicable manner. In respect of getting into the Queen's Palace, the Boy Jones was a fool to him. He knows everything that takes place there. On a late auspicious occasion when the nation was hourly expecting to be transported with joy for the ninth time, it is surprising what he knew on the question of Chloroform. Now, Doctor Locock is known to be the most trustworthy even of doctors; and Her Majesty's self-reliance and quiet force of character have passed into an axiom. I want to know, therefore, How, When, Where, and From Whom, did the Best Authority acquire all that chloroform information which he was, for months, prowling about all the clubs, going up and down all the streets, having all London to dine with him, and going out to dine with all London, for the express purpose of diffusing? I hope society does not demand that I should be slowly bothered to death by any man, without demanding this much satisfaction. How did he come by his intelligence, I ask? The Best Authority must have had an authority. Let it be produced.

I have mentioned the pocket-books in which he deciphers secret entries; many of them written, probably, in invisible ink, for they are non-existent even to the owner's eyes. How does he come by all the ambassadors' letter-bags, and by all the note-books of all the judges? Who gave him all the little scraps of paper that the late Mr. Palmer wrote and handed about in the course of his protracted trial? He tells all sorts of people what was in them all; he must have seen them, surely. Who made out for him the accounts of this journal? Who calculated for him the sum total of profit? And when will it be quite convenient to him to name an early day for handing over to the Conductor the very large balance, with several ciphers at the end of it, which clearly must be owing the said Conductor, as he has never laid hands on it yet?

How did he get into the Russian lines? He was always there; just as he was always in the English camp, and always coming home to put Mr. Russell right, and going back again. It was he who found out that the Commissariat wouldn't give the *Times* rations of pork, and that the porkless *Times* would never afterwards leave the Commissariat alone. Had he known much of the Russian leaders before the war, that he began to talk of them so familiarly by their surnames as soon as the first gun was fired? Will any of us ever forget while memory holds her seat in these distracted globes, our aching heads, what we suffered from this man in connection with the Redan? Can the most Christian of us ever forgive the lies he told us about the Malakhoff? I might myself overlook even those injuries, but for his having put so many people up to making plans of that detested fortress, on tablecloths, with salt-spoons, forks, dessert-dishes, nut-crackers, and wine-glasses. Which frightful persecution, a thousand times inflicted on me, upon his authority—the best—I hereby swear never to condone! Never shall the Sapping and Mining knowledge, stamped in characters of lead upon this burning brow, remain with me but as a dreadful injury stimulating me to devote the residue of my life to vengeance on the Best Authority. If I could have his blood, I would! I avow it, in fell remembrance of the baying hounds of Boredom with which he hunted me in the days of the Russian war.

Will he, on this public challenge, stand forward foot to foot against me, his mortal enemy, and declare how he can justify his behaviour? Why am I, a free-born Briton, who never, never will—or rather who never, never would, if I could help it—why am I to truckle to this tyrant all the days of my life? Why is the Best Authority, Gesler-like, to set his hat upon a pole in the épergne of every dinner table, in the hall of every club-house, in the stones of every street, and, violating the Charter proclaimed by the Guardian Angels who sang that strain, to demand me for his slave? What does he mean by his unreasonable requirement that I shall make over my five senses to him? Who is he that he is to absorb my entity into his non-entity? And are not these his appetites? I put it to Flounceby.

Flounceby is rather an obstinate character (Mrs. Flounceby says the most obstinate of men; but, that may be her impulsive way of expressing herself), and will argue with you on any point, for any length of time you like—or don't like. He is certain to beat you, too, by a neat method he has of representing you to have said something which you never did say, or so much as think of, and then indignantly contradicting it. No further back than within this month, Flounceby was holding forth at a great rate on the most argumentative question of all questions—which every question is with him, and therefore I simply mean any question—and had made out his case entirely to his own satisfaction, and was pounding his dinner-company of six with it, as if they were plastic metal, and he and the question were the steam-hammer; when an unknown man of faint and fashionable aspect (one of the six) slided out from under the hammer without any apparent effort, and flatly denied Flounceby's positions, one and all, "on the best authority." If he had contested them on any ground of faith, reason, probability, or analogy, Flounceby would have pinned him like a bull-dog; but, the mere mention of the Best Authority (it was a genteel question in its bearings) instantly laid Flounceby on his back. He turned pale, trembled, and gave in. It happened, however, as it always does at Flounceby's, that the next most argumentative question of questions came on immediately afterwards. Upon that point I, deriving courage from the faint and fashionable man, who by the way from the moment of his victory, retired, like Iago, and word spake never more—opposed myself to Flounceby. I had not been rolled and flattened under the steam-hammer two minutes, when Flounceby, throwing the machinery out of gear, gave me one final crush from the Best Authority, and left me for dead. Goaded to distraction by the anonymous oppressor, I wildly cried that I cared nothing for the Best Authority. A shudder went round the table, and all present shrank from me, as if I had distinctly made the one greatest and most audacious denial of which humanity is capable.

Still goaded by this oppressor—always goaded by this oppressor—I ask, Who is he? Whence does he come when he goes out to dinner; where does he give those dinners at which so many people dine? Was he enrolled in the last census? Does he bear his part in the light burdens of the country? Is he assessed to the equitable income-tax? I call upon the Best Authority to stand forth.

On more than one occasion I have thought I had him. In that portion of Pall Mall, London, which is bounded on the east by the Senior United Service Club House, and on the west by the Carlton Club House—a miasmatic spot, in which I suppose more boredom to be babbled daily, than in any two thousand square miles on the surface of the earth—into that dismal region I had sometimes tracked the despot, and there lost him. One day, upon the steps of the Athenæum, of which eminent institution I have the honour to be a member, I found a fellow-member, Mr. Prowler, of the Royal Society of Arts, lying in wait, under the portico, to pour a drop of special information into the ear of every man and brother who approached the temple. Mr. Prowler is a grave and secret personage, always specially informed, who whispers his way through life; incessantly acting Midas to everybody else's Reed. He goes about, like a lukewarm draught of air, breathing intelligence into the ears of his fellow-men, and passing on. He had often previously brought me into trouble, and caused me to be covered with confusion and shame. On this occasion the subject-matter of his confidence was—if I may be allowed the expression—so much more than usually impossible that I took the liberty to intimate my sense of its irreconcilability with all laws human and divine, and to ask him from whom he had his information? He replied, from the Best Authority; at the same time implying, with a profound and portentous movement of his head, that that mysterious Being had just gone in. I thought the hour was come—rushed into the hall—and found nobody there, but a weak old gentleman, to all appearance harmlessly idiotic, who was drying his pocket-handkerchief before the fire, and gazing over his shoulder at two graceful leathern institutions, in the form of broken French bedsteads without the pole, which embellish that chaste spot and invite to voluptuous repose.

On another occasion, I was so near having my hand at my enemy's throat and he so unaccountably eluded me, that a brief recital of the circumstances may aptly close this paper. The pursuit and escape occurred at the Reform Club, of which eminent Institution likewise, I have the honour to be a member. As I know the Best Authority to pervade that building constantly, my eye had frequently sought him, with a vague sense of the supernatural and an irresistible feeling of dread, in the galleries overhanging the hall where I had but too often heard him quoted. No trace of his form, however, had revealed itself to me. I had frequently been close upon him; I had heard of him as having "just gone down to the House," or "just come up"; but, between us there had been a void. I should explain that in the palatial establishment of which I write, there is a dreadful little vault on the left of the Hall, where we hang up our hats and coats; the gloom and closeness of which vault, shade the imagination. I was crossing the Hall to dinner, in the height of the then Session of Parliament, when my distinguished friend, O' Boodleom (Irish Member), being disappointed of a man of title, whom he was waiting to stun with a piece of information which he had just telegraphed to Erin, did me the honour to discharge that weapon upon me. As I had every conceivable reason to know that it could not possibly be correct, I deferentially asked O'Boodleom from whom he had received it? "Bedad, sir," says he—and, knowing his sensitive bravery, I really felt grateful to him, for not saying, "Blood, sir!"—"Bedad, sir," says he, "I had it, a while ago, from the Best Authority, and he's at this moment hanging up the entire of his coat and umberreller in the vault." I dashed into the vault, and seized (as I fondly thought) the Best Authority, to cope with him at last in the death-struggle. It was only my cousin Cackles, admitted on all hands to be the most amiable ass alive, who inoffensively asked me if I had heard the news?

The Best Authority was gone! How gone, whither gone, I am in no condition to say. I again, therefore, raise my voice, and call upon him to stand forward and declare himself.

PLEASE TO LEAVE YOUR UMBRELLA

I MADE a visit the other day to the Palace at Hampton Court. I may have had my little reason for being in the best of humours with the Palace at Hampton Court; but that little reason is neither here (ah! I wish it were here!) nor there.

In the readiest of moods for complying with any civil request, I was met, in the entrance-hall of the public apartments at Hampton Court, by the most obliging of policemen, who requested me to leave my umbrella in his custody at the foot of the stairs. "Most willingly," said I, "for my umbrella is very wet." So the policeman hung it on a rack, to drip on the stone floor with the sound of an irregular clock, and gave me a card of authority to reclaim it when I should come out again. Then, I went prosperously through the long suites of deserted rooms, now looking at the pictures, and now leaning over the broad old window-seats and looking down into the rainy old gardens, with their formal gravel walks, clipped trees, and trim turf banks—gardens with court-suits on. There was only one other visitor (in very melancholy boots) at Hampton Court that blessed day: who soon went his long grave way, alternately dark in the piers and light in the windows, and was seen no more.

" I wonder," said I, in the manner of the Sentimental Journeyer, " I wonder, Yorick, whether, with this little reason in my bosom, I should ever want to get out of these same interminable suites of rooms, and return to noise and bustle! It seems to me that I could stay here very well until the grisly phantom on the pale horse came at a gallop up the staircase, seeking me. My little reason should make of these queer dingy closet-rooms, these little corner chimney-pieces tier above tier, this old blue china of squat shapes, these dreary old state bedsteads with attenuated posts, nay, dear Yorick," said I, stretching forth my hand towards a stagnant pool of blacking in a frame, "should make, even of these very works of art, an encompassing universe of beauty and happiness. The fountain in the staid red and white courtyard without (for we had turned that angle of the building), would never fall too monotonously on my ear, the four chilled sparrows now fluttering on the brink of its basin would never chirp a wish for change of weather, no bargeman on the rain-speckled river; no wayfarer rain-belated under the leafless trees in the park, would ever come into my fancy as examining in despair those swollen clouds, and vainly peering for a ray of sunshine. I and my little reason, Yorick, would keep house here, all our lives, in perfect contentment; and when we died, our ghosts should make of this dull Palace the first building ever haunted happily!"

I had got thus far in my adaptation of the *Sentimental Journey* when I was recalled to my senses by the visible presence of the Blacking which I just now mentioned. "Good Heaven!" I cried, with a start; "now I think of it, what a number of articles that policeman below-stairs required me to leave with him!"

"Only an umbrella. He said no more than, Please to leave your umbrella."

"Faith, Yorick," I returned, "he insisted on my putting so much valuable property into my umbrella, and leaving it all at the foot of the stairs before I entered on the contemplation of many of these pictures— that I tremble to think of the extent to which I have been despoiled. That policeman demanded of me, for the time being, all the best bumps in my head. Form, colour, size, proportion, distance, individuality, the true perception of every object on the face of the earth or the face of the Heavens, he insisted on my leaving at the foot of the stairs, before I could confide in the catalogue. And now I find the moon to be really made of green cheese; the sun to be a yellow wafer or a little round blister; the deep wild sea to be a shallow series of slate-coloured festoons turned upside down; the human face Divine to be a smear; the whole material and immaterial universe to be sticky with treacle and polished up with blacking. Conceive what I must be, through all the rest of my life, if the policeman should make off with my umbrella and never restore it!"

Filled with the terrors of this idea, I retraced my steps to the top of the stairs, and looked over the hand-rail for my precious property. It was still keeping time on the stone pavement like an irregular clock, and the policeman (evidently possessed by no dishonest spirit) was reading a newspaper. Calmed and composed, I resumed my musing way through the many rooms.

Please to leave your umbrella. Of all the Powers that get your umbrella from you, Taste is the most encroaching and insatiate. Please to put into your umbrella, to be deposited in the hall until you come out again, all your powers of comparison, all your experience, all your individual opinions. Please to accept with this ticket for your umbrella the individual opinions of some other personage whose name is Somebody, or Nobody, or Anybody, and to swallow the same without a word of demur. Be so good as to leave your eyes with your umbrellas, gentlemen, and to deliver up your private judgment with your walking-sticks. Apply this ointment, compounded by the learned Dervish, and you shall see no end of camels going with the greatest ease through needles' eyes. Leave your umbrella full of property which is not by any means to be poked at this collection, with the police, and you shall acknowledge, whether you will or no, this hideous porcelain-ware to be beautiful, these wearisomely stiff and unimaginative forms to be graceful, these coarse daubs to be masterpieces. Leave your umbrella and take up your gentility. Taste proclaims to you what is the genteel thing; receive it and be genteel! Think no more of your umbrellas—be they the care of the Police of Scotland Yard! Think no more for yourselves—be you the care of the Police of Taste!

I protest that the very Tax-gatherer does not demand so much of me as the Powers who demand my umbrella. The Tax-gatherer will not allow me to wear hair-powder unmolested; but the Umbrella-gatherer will not allow me to wear my head. The Tax-gatherer takes toll of my spade; but the Umbrella-gatherer will not permit me to call my spade, a spade. Longinus, Aristotle, Doctor Waagen, and the Musical Glasses, Parliamentary Commissions, the Lord-Knows-Who, Marlborough House, and the Brompton Boilers, have declared my spade to be a mop-stick. And I must please to give up my umbrella, and believe in the mop-stick.

Again. The moral distinctions, and the many remembrances, and balances of This and That, which I am required by other authorities to put into my so-often demanded umbrella and to leave in the lobby, are as numerous as the Barnacle family. It was but a sessions or two ago, that I went to the gallery at the Old Bailey, to hear a trial. Was my umbrella all that I was called upon to leave behind me, previous to taking my seat? Certainly not. I was requested to put so many things into it that it became, though of itself a neat umbrella, more bulgy than Mrs. Gamp's. I found it insisted upon, that I should cram into this unfortunate article all the weighty comparisons I had ever made in my life between the guilt of laying hands upon a pound of scrag of mutton, and upon hundreds of thousands of pounds of sterling money. I found it insisted upon, that I should leave with my umbrella before I went into Court, any suspicions that I had about me (and I happened to have a good many), that distortion and perversion of the truth, plainly for the purpose of so much gain, and for the enhancement of a professional reputation, were to be observed there, outside the dock and beyond the prisoner. I found myself required to take a ticket, conventionally used in that place, in exchange for my natural perception of many painfully ludicrous things that should have become obsolete long ago. Not that I complain of this particular demand at the door; for otherwise how could I have borne the fearful absurdity of the Judge being unable to discharge the last awful duty of his office without putting on a strange little comical hat, only used for the dismissal of a blood-stained soul into eternity? Or how could I have withheld myself from bursting out into a fit of laughter, which would have been contempt of court, when the same exalted functionary and two virtuous Counsel (I never in my life had the pleasure of hearing two gentlemen talk so much virtue) were grimly pleasant on the dressing-up in woollen wigs of certain Negro Singers whose place of entertainment had been innocently the scene of manslaughter. While the exalted functionary himself, and the two virtuous counsel themselves, were at that very moment dressed up in woolley wigs, to the full as false and ridiculous as any theatrical wigs in the world, only they were not of the negro colour!

But, when I went to the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons, I had a greater load to leave with my umbrella than Christian had to lay down in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The difference between

Black and White, which is really a very large one and enough to burst any Umbrella, was the first thing I had to force into mine. And it was well for me that this was insisted on by the Police, or how could I have escaped the Serjeant-at-Arms, when the very same Member who on the last occasion of my going to the very same place I had with my own ears heard announce with the profoundest emotion that he came down to that house expressly to lay his hand upon his heart and declare that Black was White and there was no such thing as Black, now announced with the profoundest emotion that he came down to that house expressly to lay his hand upon his heart and declare that White was Black and there was no such thing as White? If you have such an article about you (said the Umbrella-taker to me in effect) as the distinction between very ill-constructed common places, and sound patriotic facts, you are requested to leave it at the door here.—By all means, said I.—You have there a Noun of Multitude or signifying many, called The Country; please to put that too, in your Umbrella.—Willingly, said I.—Your belief that public opinion is not the lobby of this place and the bores of the clubs, will be much in your way, and everybody else's hereabouts; please to leave that likewise.—You are welcome to it, said I.—But I am bound to admit that, thus denuded, I passed quite a pleasant evening; which I am certain I could not have done, if I had been allowed to take my Umbrella and its cumbrous contents in with me.

Please to leave your Umbrella. I have gone into churches where I have been required to leave my Umbrella in a sham mediæval porch, with hundreds of eventful years of History squeezed in among its ribs. I have gone into public assemblages of great pretensions—even into assemblages gathered together under the most sacred of names—and my Umbrella, filled to the handle with my sense of Christian fairness and moderation, has been taken from me at the door. All through life, according to my personal experience, I must please to leave my Umbrella, or I can't go in.

I had reached this point and was about to apostrophise Yorick once more, when a civil voice requested me, in obliging tones, to "claim my Umbrella." I might have done that, without a ticket, as there was no other on the rack in the hall at Hampton Court Palace, whither I had now worked my way round by another course, without knowing it. However, I gave back my ticket, and got back my Umbrella, and then I and my little reason went dreaming away under its shelter through the fast-falling spring rain, which had a sound in it that day like the rustle of the coming summer.

FROM "ALL THE YEAR ROUND"

(1859–1869)

RATHER A STRONG DOSE

"Doctor John Campbell, the minister of the Tabernacle Chapel, Finsbury, and editor of the *British Banner*, etc., with that massive vigour which distinguishes his style," did, we are informed by Mr. Howitt, "deliver a verdict in the *Banner*, for November, 1852," of great importance and favour to the Table-rapping cause. We are not informed whether the Public, sitting in judgment on the question, reserved any point in this great verdict for subsequent consideration; but the verdict would seem to have been regarded by a perverse generation as not quite final, inasmuch as Mr. Howitt finds it necessary to re-open the case, a round ten years afterwards, in nine hundred and sixty-two stiff octavo pages, published by Messrs. Longman and Company.

Mr. Howitt is in such a bristling temper on the Supernatural subject, that we will not take the great liberty of arguing any point with him. But—with the view of assisting him to make converts—we will inform our readers, on his conclusive authority, what they are required to believe; premising what may rather astonish them in connexion with their views of a certain historical trifle, called The Reformation, that their present state of unbelief is all the fault of Protestantism, and that "it is high time, therefore, to protest against Protestantism."

They will please to believe, by way of an easy beginning, all the stories of good and evil demons, ghosts, prophecies, communication with spirits, and practice of magic, that ever obtained, or are said to have ever obtained, in the North, in the South, in the East, in the West, from the earliest and darkest ages, as to which we have any hazy intelligence, real or supposititious, down to the yet unfinished displacement of the red men in North America. They will please to believe that nothing in this wise was changed by the fulfilment of Our Saviour's mission upon earth; and further, that what Saint Paul did, can be done again, and has been done again. As this is not much to begin with, they will throw in at this point rejection of Faraday and Brewster, and "poor Paley," and implicit acceptance of those shining lights, the Reverend Charles Beecher, and the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher ("one of the most vigorous and eloquent preachers of America"), and the Reverend Adin Ballou.

Having thus cleared the way for a healthy exercise of faith, our advancing readers will next proceed especially to believe in the old story of the Drummer of Tedworth, in the inspiration of George Fox, in "the spiritualism, prophecies, and prevision" of Huntingdon the coal-porter (him who prayed for the leather breeches which miraculously fitted him), and even in the Cock Lane Ghost. They will please wind up, before fetching their breath, with believing that there is a close analogy between rejection of any such plain and proved facts as those contained in the whole foregoing catalogue, and the opposition encountered by the inventors of railways, lighting by gas, microscopes and telescopes, and vaccination. This stinging consideration they will always carry rankling in their remorseful hearts as they advance.

As touching the Cock Lane Ghost, our conscience-stricken readers will please particularly to reproach themselves for having ever supposed that important spiritual manifestation to have been a gross imposture which was thoroughly detected. They will please to believe that Dr. Johnson believed in it, and that, in Mr. Howitt's words, he "appears to have had excellent reasons for his belief." With a view to this end, the faithful will be so good as to obliterate from their Boswells the following passage: "Many of my readers, I am convinced, are to this hour under an impression that Johnson was thus foolishly deceived. It will therefore surprise them a good deal when they are informed upon undoubted authority that Johnson was one of those by whom the imposture was detected. The story had become so popular, that he thought it should be investigated, and in this research he was assisted by the Rev. Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, the great detector of impostures"—and therefore tremendously obnoxious to Mr. Howitt—"who informs me that after the gentlemen who went and examined into the evidence were satisfied of its falsity, Johnson wrote in their presence an account of it, which was published in the newspapers and *Gentleman's Magazine*, and undeceived the world." But as there will still remain another highly inconvenient passage in the Boswells of the true believers, they must likewise be at the trouble of cancelling the following also, referring to a later time: "He (Johnson) expressed great indignation at the imposture of the Cock Lane Ghost, and related with much satisfaction how he had assisted in detecting the cheat, and had published an account of it in the newspapers."

They will next believe (if they be, in the words of Captain Bobadil, "so generously minded") in the transatlantic trance-speakers "who professed to speak from direct inspiration," Mrs. Cora Hatch, Mrs. Henderson, and Miss Emma Hardinge; and they will believe in those eminent ladies having "spoken on Sundays to five hundred thousand hearers"—small audiences, by the way, compared with the intelligent concourse recently assembled in the city of New York, to do honour to the Nuptials of General the Honourable T. Barnum Thumb. At about this stage of their spiritual education, they may take the opportunity of believing in "letters from a distinguished gentleman of New York, in which the frequent appearance of the gentleman's deceased wife and of Dr. Franklin, to him and other well-known friends, are unquestionably unequalled in the annals of the marvellous." Why these modest appearances should seem at all out of the common way to Mr. Howitt (who would be in a state of flaming indignation if we thought them so), we could not imagine until we found on reading further, "it is solemnly stated that the witnesses have not only seen but touched these spirits, and handled the clothes and hair of Franklin." Without presuming to go Mr. Howitt's length of considering this by any means a marvellous experience, we yet venture to confess that it has awakened in our mind many interesting speculations touching the present whereabout in space of the spirits of Mr. Howitt's own departed boots and hats.

The next articles of belief are Belief in the moderate figures of "thirty thousand media in the United States in 1853"; and in two million five hundred thousand spiritualists in the same country of composed minds, in 1855, "professing to have arrived at their convictions of spiritual communication from personal experience"; and in "an average rate of increase of three hundred thousand per annum," still in the same country of calm philosophers. Belief in spiritual knockings, in all manner of American places, and, among others, in the house of "a Doctor Phelps at Stratford, Connecticut, a man of the highest character for intelligence," says Mr. Howitt, and to whom we willingly concede the possession of far higher intelligence than was displayed by his spiritual knocker, in " frequently cutting to pieces the clothes of one of his boys," and in breaking "seventy-one panes of glass"—unless, indeed, the knocker, when in the body, was connected with the tailoring and glazing interests. Belief in immaterial performers playing (in the dark though: they are obstinate about its being in the dark) on material instruments of wood, catgut, brass, tin, and parchment. Your belief is further requested in "the Kentucky Jerks." The spiritual achievements thus euphoniously denominated "appear," says Mr. Howitt, "to have been of a very disorderly kind." It appears that a certain Mr. Doke, a Presbyterian clergyman, "was first seized by the jerks," and the jerks laid hold of Mr. Doke in that unclerical way and with that scant respect for his cloth, that they "twitched him about in a most extraordinary manner, often when in the pulpit, and caused him to shout aloud, and run out of the pulpit into the woods, screaming like a madman. When the fit was over, he returned calmly to his pulpit and finished the service." The congregation having waited, we presume, and edified themselves with the distant bellowings of Doke in the woods, until he came back again, a little warm and hoarse, but otherwise in fine condition, "People were often seized at hotels, and at table would, on lifting a glass to drink, jerk the liquor to the ceiling; ladies would at the breakfast-table suddenly be compelled to throw aloft their coffee, and frequently break the cup and saucer." A certain venturesome clergyman vowed that he would preach down the Jerks, "but he was seized in the midst of his attempt, and made so ridiculous that he withdrew himself from further notice"—an example much to be commended. That same favoured land of America has been particularly favoured in the development of "innumerable mediums," and Mr. Howitt orders you to believe in Daniel Dunglas Home, Andrew Davis Jackson, and Thomas L. Harris, as "the three most remarkable, or most familiar, on this side of the Atlantic." Concerning Mr. Home, the articles of belief (besides removal of furniture) are, That through him raps have been given and communications made from deceased friends. That "his hand has been seized by spirit influence, and rapid communications written out, of a surprising character to those to whom they were addressed." That at his bidding, "spirit hands have appeared which have been seen, felt, and recognised frequently, by persons present, as those of deceased friends." That he has been frequently lifted up and carried, floating "as it were" through a room, near the ceiling. That in America, "all these phenomena have displayed themselves in greater force than here"—which we have not the slightest doubt of. That he is "the planter of spiritualism all over Europe." That "by circumstances that no man could have devised, he became the guest of the Emperor of the French, of the King of Holland, of the Czar of Russia, and of many lesser princes." That he returned from "this unpremeditated missionary tour," "endowed with competence"; but not before, "at the Tuileries, on one occasion when the emperor, empress, a distinguished lady, and himself only were sitting at table, a hand appeared, took up a pen, and wrote, in a strong and well-known character, the word Napoleon. The hand was then successively presented to the several personages of the party to kiss." The stout believer, having disposed of Mr. Home, and rested a little, will then proceed to believe in Andrew Davis Jackson, or Andrew Jackson Davis (Mr. Howitt, having no Medium at hand to settle this difference and reveal the right name of the seer, calls him by both names), who merely "beheld all the essential natures of things, saw the interior of men and animals, as perfectly as their exterior; and described them in language so correct, that the most able technologists could not surpass him. He pointed out the proper remedies for all the complaints, and the shops where they were to be obtained";—in the latter respect appearing to hail from an advertising circle, as we conceive. It was also in this gentleman's limited department to "see the metals in the earth," and to have "the most distant regions and their various productions present before him." Having despatched this tough case, the believer will pass on to Thomas L. Harris, and will swallow *him* easily, together with "whole epics" of his composition; a certain work "of scarcely less than Miltonic grandeur, called The Lyric of the Golden Age—a lyric pretty nigh as long as one of Mr. Howitt's volumes—dictated by Mr. (not Mrs.) Harris to the publisher in ninety-four hours; and several extempore sermons, possessing the remarkably lucid property of being "full, unforced, out-gushing, unstinted, and absorbing." The candidate for examination in pure belief, will then pass on to the spirit-photography department; this, again, will be found in so-favoured America, under the superintendence of Medium Mumler, a photographer of Boston: who was "astonished" (though, on Mr. Howitt's showing, he surely ought not to have been) "on taking a photograph of himself, to find also by his side the figure of a young girl, which he immediately recognised as that of a deceased relative. The circumstance made a great excitement. Numbers of persons rushed to his rooms, and many have found deceased friends photographed with themselves." (Perhaps Mr. Mumler, too, may become "endowed with competence" in time. Who knows?) Finally, the true believers in the gospel according to Howitt, have, besides, but to pin their faith on "ladies who see spirits habitually," on ladies who *know* they have a tendency to soar in the air on sufficient provocation, and on a few other gnats to be taken after their camels, and they shall be pronounced by Mr. Howitt not of the stereotyped class of minds," and not partakers of "the astonishing ignorance of the press," and shall receive a first-class certificate of merit.

But before they pass through this portal into the Temple of Serene Wisdom, we, halting blind and helpless on the steps, beg to suggest to them what they must at once and for ever disbelieve. They must disbelieve that in the dark times, when very few were versed in what are now the mere recreations of Science, and when those few formed a priesthood-class apart, any marvels were wrought by the aid of concave mirrors and a knowledge of the properties of certain odours and gases, although the self-same marvels could be reproduced before their eyes at the Polytechnic Institution, Regent Street, London, any day in the year. They must by no means believe that Conjuring and Ventriloquism are old trades. They must disbelieve all Philosophical Transactions containing the records of painful and careful inquiry into now familiar disorders of the senses of seeing and hearing, and into the wonders of somnambulism, epilepsy, hysteria, miasmatic influence, vegetable poisons derived by whole communities from corrupted air, diseased imitation, and moral infection. They must disbelieve all such awkward leading cases as the case of the Woodstock Commissioners and their man, and the case of the identity of the Stockwell Ghost, with the maid-servant. They must disbelieve the vanishing of champion haunted houses (except, indeed, out of Mr. Howitt's book), represented to have been closed and ruined for years, before one day's inquiry by four gentlemen associated with this Journal, and one hour's reference to the Local Rate-books. They must disbelieve all possibility of a human creature on the last verge of the dark bridge from Life to Death, being mysteriously able, in occasional cases, so to influence the mind of one very near and dear, as vividly to impress that mind with some disturbed sense of the solemn change impending. They must disbelieve the possibility of the lawful existence of a class of intellects which, humbly conscious of the illimitable power of God and of their own weakness and ignorance, never deny that He can cause the souls of the dead to revisit the earth, or that He may have caused the souls of the dead to revisit the earth, or that He can cause any lawful or wondrous thing to be; but to deny the likelihood of apparitions or spirits coming here upon the stupidest of bootless errands, and producing credentials tantamount to a solicitation of our vote and interest and next proxy, to get them into the Asylum for Idiots. They must disbelieve the right of Christian people who do *not* protest against Protestantism, but who hold it to be a barrier against the darkest superstitions that can enslave the soul, to guard with jealousy all approaches tending down to Cock Lane Ghosts and such-like infamous swindles, widely degrading when widely believed in; and they must disbelieve that such people have the right to know, and that it is their duty to know, wonder-workers by their fruits, and to test miracle-mongers by the tests of probability, analogy, and common sense. They must disbelieve all rational explanations of thoroughly proved experiences (only) which appear supernatural, derived from the average experience and study of the visible world. They must disbelieve the speciality of the Master and the Disciples, and that it is a monstrosity to test the wonders of show-folk by the same touchstone. Lastly, they must disbelieve that one of the best accredited chapters in the history of mankind is the chapter that records the astonishing deceits continually practised, with no object or purpose but the distorted pleasure of deceiving.

We have summed up a few—not nearly all—of the articles of belief and disbelief to which Mr. Howitt most arrogantly demands an implicit adherence. To uphold these, he uses a book as a Clown in a Pantomime does, and knocks everybody on the head with it who comes in his way. Moreover, he is an angrier personage than the Clown, and does not experimentally try the effect of his red-hot poker on your skins, but straightway runs you through the body and soul with it. He is always raging to tell you that if you are not Howitt, you are Atheist and Anti-Christ. He is the sans-culotte of the Spiritual Revolution, and will not hear of your accepting this point and rejecting that;—down your throat with them all, one and indivisible, at the point of the pike; No Liberty, Totality, Fraternity, or Death!

Without presuming to question that "it is high time to protest against Protestantism" on such very substantial grounds as Mr. Howitt sets forth, we do presume to think that it is high time to protest against Mr. Howitt's spiritualism, as being a little in excess of the peculiar merit of Thomas L. Harris's sermons, and somewhat *too* "full, out-gushing, unstinted, and absorbing."

THE
MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

CHARLES DICKENS: Born 1812—Died 1870

Editor's Note

As Forster has related in his Life *of Charles Dickens, the author, on the 8th June,* 1870, *was working on* The Mystery of Edwin Drood ; *and in the evening, just before dinner, he laid aside the MS. at the point where it remains unfinished, and then wrote some letters. That night he collapsed ; and he died the following evening, leaving unsolved the most famous "detective" story in English. The* Mystery *that so dramatically was to remain a mystery has been a subject of study to many Dickensians, writers, and amateur detectives. What happened to Edwin Drood ? How did Dickens intend to work out the story ? Who* was *Datchery ? These are the main questions with which the reader of this baffling book is left. There are, at the present time, at least thirteen books written to solve the mystery ; and, just before the World War, feeling about Edwin Drood rose to such a height that a public meeting was held in London to discuss the question. Some people maintain that Drood was murdered ; others, that he escaped. Datchery has been identified, by different writers, with* (1) *Tartar,* (2) *Neville Landless,* (3) *Bazzard,* (4) *Grewgious, and* (5) *Helena Landless. And there is an equally wide variety of other conclusions. The difficulty, if not the impossibility, of indicating the various "solutions" can be appreciated. What is certain is that no one "solution" or continuation has ever satisfied all the critics, and that none ever will. Since it is the editorial fashion to advance a theory, ours is that even if Dickens had decided on the development of his* Mystery *(which he may not have done), he almost certainly had not resolved its lesser issues and the fate of those involved in them. In support of this theory there are reasons other than the interesting and significant ones that neither to his confidant Forster, nor to the illustrator Luke Fildes, did Dickens ever give any clue to the mystery, although it was a subject of their discussions. To conclude with our usual identifications :—Princess Puffer was drawn from "Lascar Sal," who kept an opium-den just beyond the churchyard of St. George's-in-the-East ; she was living in* 1875. *Mr. Sapsea, in Edwin Harris's* John Jasper's Gatehouse (1931), *is identified as Jesse Thomas, an auctioneer who was Mayor of Rochester in the* 40*'s. Tope was William Miles, verger of Rochester Cathedral.*

On dangerous Ground.

THE MYSTERY
OF
EDWIN DROOD

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

ILLUSTRATED BY
SIR LUKE FILDES, R.A.

LONDON:
HAZELL, WATSON & VINEY, LTD.

THE
MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD

CHAPTER I

THE DAWN

An ancient English Cathedral Tower? How can the ancient English Cathedral tower be here! The well-known massive gray square tower of its old Cathedral? How can that be here! There is no spike of rusty iron in the air, between the eye and it, from any point of the real prospect. What is the spike that intervenes, and who has set it up? Maybe it is set up by the Sultan's orders for the impaling of a horde of Turkish robbers, one by one. It is so, for cymbals clash, and the Sultan goes by to his palace in long procession. Ten thousand scimitars flash in the sunlight, and thrice ten thousand dancing-girls strew flowers. Then, follow white elephants caparisoned in countless gorgeous colours, and infinite in number and attendants. Still the Cathedral Tower rises in the background, where it cannot be, and still no writhing figure is on the grim spike. Stay! Is the spike so low a thing as the rusty spike on the top of a post of an old bedstead that has tumbled all awry? Some vague period of drowsy laughter must be devoted to the consideration of this possibility.

Shaking from head to foot, the man whose scattered consciousness has thus fantastically pieced itself together, at length rises, supports his trembling frame upon his arms, and looks around. He is in the meanest and closest of small rooms. Through the ragged window-curtain, the light of early day steals in from a miserable court. He lies, dressed, across a large unseemly bed, upon a bedstead that has indeed given way under the weight upon it. Lying, also dressed and also across the bed, not longwise, are a Chinaman, a Lascar, and a haggard woman. The two first are in a sleep or stupor; the last is blowing at a kind of pipe, to kindle it. And as she blows, and shading it with her lean hand, concentrates its red spark of light, it serves in the dim morning as a lamp to show him what he sees of her.

"Another?" says this woman, in a querulous, rattling whisper. "Have another?"

He looks about it, with his hand to his forehead.

"Ye've smoked as many as five since ye come in at midnight," the woman goes on, as she chronically complains. "Poor me, poor me, my head is so bad. Them two come in after ye. Ah, poor me, the business is slack, is slack! Few Chinamen about the Docks, and fewer Lascars, and no ships coming in, these say! Here's another ready for ye, deary. Ye'll remember like a good soul, won't ye, that the market price is dreffle high just now? More nor three shillings and sixpence for a thimbleful! And ye'll remember that nobody but me (and Jack Chinaman t'other side the court; but he can't do it as well as me) has the true secret of mixing it? Ye'll pay up according, deary, won't ye?"

She blows at the pipe as she speaks, and, occasionally bubbling at it, inhales much of its contents.

"O me, O me, my lungs is weak, my lungs is bad! It's nearly ready for ye, deary. Ah, poor me, poor me, my poor hand shakes like to drop off! I see ye coming-to, and I ses to my poor self, 'I'll have another ready for him, and he'll bear in mind the market price of opium, and pay according.' O my poor head! I makes my pipes of old penny ink-bottles, ye see, deary—this is one—and I fits in a mouth-piece, this way, and I takes my mixter out of this thimble with this little horn spoon; and so I fills, deary. Ah, my poor nerves! I got Heavens hard drunk for sixteen year afore I took to this; but this don't hurt me, not to speak of. And it takes away the hunger as well as wittles, deary."

She hands him the nearly-emptied pipe, and sinks back, turning over on her face.

He rises unsteadily from the bed, lays the pipe upon the hearth-stone, draws back the ragged curtain, and looks with repugnance at his three companions. He notices that the woman has opium-smoked herself into a strange likeness of the Chinaman. His form of cheek, eye, and temple, and his colour, are repeated in her. Said Chinaman convulsively wrestles with one of his many Gods or Devils, perhaps, and snarls horribly. The Lascar laughs and dribbles at the mouth. The hostess is still.

"What visions can *she* have?" the waking man muses, as he turns her face towards him, and stands looking down at it. "Visions of many butchers' shops, and public-houses, and much credit? Of an increase of hideous customers, and this horrible bedstead set upright again, and this horrible court swept clean? What can she rise to, under any quantity of opium, higher than that!—Eh?"

He bends down his ear, to listen to her mutterings.

"Unintelligible!"

As he watches the spasmodic shoots and darts that break out of her face and limbs, like fitful lightning out of a dark sky, some contagion in them seizes upon him: insomuch that he has to withdraw himself to a lean arm-chair by the hearth—placed there, perhaps, for such emergies—and to sit in it, holding tight, until he has got the better of this unclean spirit of imitation.

Then he comes back, pounces on the Chinaman, and seizing him with both hands by the throat, turns him violently on the bed. The Chinaman clutches the aggressive hands, resists, gasps, and protests.

"What do you say?"

A watchful pause.

"Unintelligible!"

Slowly loosening his grasp as he listens to the incoherent jargon with an attentive frown, he turns to the Lascar and fairly drags him forth upon the floor. As he falls, the Lascar starts into a half-risen attitude, glares with his eyes, lashes about him fiercely with his arms, and draws a phantom knife. It then becomes apparent that the woman has taken possession of this knife, for safety's sake; for she too starting up, and restraining and expostulating with him, the knife is visible in her dress, not in his, when they drowsily drop back, side by side.

There has been chattering and clattering enough between them, but to no purpose. When any distinct word has been flung into the air, it has had no sense or sequence. Wherefore "unintelligible!" is again the comment of the watcher, made with some reassured nodding of his head, and a gloomy smile. He then lays certain silver money on the table, finds his hat, gropes his way down the broken stairs, gives a good morning to some rat-ridden doorkeepr, in bed in a black hutch beneath the stairs, and passes out.

That same afternoon, the massive gray square tower of an old Cathedral rises before the sight of a jaded traveller. The bells are going for daily vesper service, and he must needs attend it, one would say, from his haste to reach the open Cathedral door. The choir are getting on their sullied white robes, in a hurry, when he arrives among them, gets on his own robe, and falls into the procession filing in to service. Then, the Sacristan locks the iron-barred gates that divide the sanctuary from the chancel, and all of the procession having scuttled into their places, hide their faces; and then the intoned words, "WHEN THE WICKED MAN—" rise among groins of arches and beams of roof, awakening muttered thunder.

CHAPTER II

A DEAN, AND A CHAPTER ALSO

Whosoever has observed that sedate and clerical bird, the rook, may perhaps have noticed that when he wings his way homeward towards nightfall, in a sedate and clerical company, two rooks will suddenly detach themselves from the rest, will retrace their flight for some distance, and will there poise and linger; conveying to mere men the fancy that it is of some occult importance to the body politic, that this artful couple should pretend to have renounced connection with it.

Similarly, service being over in the old Cathedral with the square tower, and the choir scuffling out again, and divers venerable persons of rook-like aspect dispersing, two of these latter retrace their steps, and walk together in the echoing Close.

Not only is the day waning, but the year. The low sun is fiery and yet cold behind the monastery ruin, and the Virginia creeper on the Cathedral wall has showered half its deep-red leaves down on the pavement. There has been rain this afternoon, and a wintry shudder goes among the little pools on the cracked uneven flag-stones, and through the giant elm-trees as they shed a gust of tears. Their fallen leaves lie strewn thickly about. Some of these leaves, in a timid rush, seek sanctuary within the low arched Cathedral door; but two men coming out resist them, and cast them forth again with their feet; this done, one of the two locks the door with a goodly key, and the other flits away with a folio music-book.

"Mr. Jasper was that, Tope?"

"Yes, Mr. Dean."

"He has stayed late."

"Yes, Mr. Dean. I have stayed for him, your Reverence. He has been took a little poorly."

"Say 'taken,' Tope—to the Dean," the younger rook interposes in a low tone with this touch of correction, as who should say: "You may offer bad grammer to the laity, or the humbler clergy, not to the Dean."

Mr. Tope, Chief Verger and Showman, and accustomed to be high with excursion parties, declines with a silent loftiness to perceive that any suggestion has been tendered to him.

"And when and how has Mr. Jasper been taken—for, as Mr. Crisparkle has remarked, it is better to say taken—taken—" repeats the Dean; "when and how has Mr. Jasper been Taken——"

"Taken, sir," Tope deferentially murmurs.

"—Poorly, Tope?"

"Why, sir, Mr. Jasper was that breathed——"

"I wouldn't say 'That breathed,' Tope," Mr. Crisparkle interposes with the same touch as before. "Not English—to the Dean."

"Breathed to that extent," the Dean (not unflattered by this indirect homage) condescendingly remarks, "would be preferable."

"Mr. Jasper's breathing was so remarkably short,"—thus discreetly does Mr. Tope work his way round the sunken rock—"when he came in, that it distressed him mightily to get his notes out: which was perhaps the cause of his having a kind of fit on him after a little. His memory grew DAZED." Mr. Tope, with his eyes on the Reverend Mr. Crisparkle, shoots this word out, as defying him to improve upon it; "and a dimness and giddiness crept over him as strange as ever I saw: though he didn't seem to mind it particularly, himself. However, a little time and a little water brought him out of his DAZE." Mr. Tope repeats the word and its emphasis, with the air of saying: "As I *have* made a success, I'll make it again."

"And Mr. Jasper has gone home quite himself, has he?" asked the Dean.

"Your Reverence, he has gone home quite himself. And I'm glad to see he's having his fire kindled up, for it's chilly after the wet, and the Cathedral had both a damp feel and a damp touch this afternoon, and he was very shivery."

They all three look towards an old stone gatehouse crossing the Close, with an arched thoroughfare passing beneath it. Through its latticed window, a fire shines out upon the fast-darkening scene, involving in shadow the pendent masses of ivy and creeper covering the building's front. As the deep Cathedral-bell strikes the hour, a ripple of wind goes through these at their distance, like a ripple of the solemn sound that hums through tomb and tower, broken niche and defaced statue, in the pile close at hand.

"Is Mr. Jasper's nephew with him?" the Dean asks.

"No, sir," replied the Verger, "but expected. There's his own solitary shadow betwixt his two windows—the one looking this way, and the one looking down into the High Street—drawing his own curtains now."

"Well, well," says the Dean, with a sprightly air of breaking up the little conference, "I hope Mr. Jasper's heart may not be too much set upon his nephew. Our affections, however laudable, in this transitory world, should never master us; we should guide them, guide them. I find I am not disagreeably reminded of my dinner, by hearing my dinner-bell. Perhaps, Mr. Crisparkle, you will, before going home, look in on Jasper?"

"Certainly, Mr. Dean. And tell him that you had the kindness to desire to know how he was?"

"Ay; do so, do so. Certainly. Wished to know how he was. By all means. Wished to know how he was."

With a pleasant air of patronage, the Dean as nearly cocks his quaint hat as a Dean in good spirits may, and directs his comely gaiters towards the ruddy dining-room of the snug old red-brick house where he is at present "in residence" with Mrs. Dean and Miss Dean.

Mr. Crisparkle, Minor Canon, fair and rosy, and perpetually pitching himself head-foremost into all the deep running water in the surrounding country; Mr. Crisparkble, Minor Canon, early riser, musical, classical, cheerful, kind, good-natured, social, contented, and boylike; Mr. Crisparkle, Minor Canon and good man, lately "Coach" upon the chief Pagan high roads, but since promoted by a patron (grateful for a well-taught son) to his present Christian beat; betakes himself to the gatehouse, on his way home to his early tea.

"Sorry to hear from Tope that you have not been well, Jasper."

"O, it was nothing, nothing!"

"You look a little worn."

"Do I? O, I don't think so. What is better, I don't feel so. Tope has made too much of it, I suspect. It's his trade to make the most of everything appertaining to the Cathedral, you know."

"I may tell the Dean—I call expressly from the Dean—that you are all right again?"

The reply, with a slight smile, is: "Certainly, with my respects and thanks to the Dean."

"I'm glad to hear that you expect young Drood."

"I expect the dear fellow every moment."

"Ah! He will do you more good than a doctor, Jasper."

"More good than a dozen doctors. For I love him dearly, and I don't love doctors, or doctor's stuff."

Mr. Jasper is a dark man of some six-and-twenty, with thick, lustrous, well-arranged, black hair and whiskers. He looks older than he is, as dark men often do. His voice is deep and good, his face and figure are good, his manner is a little sombre. His room is a little sombre, and may have had its influence in forming his manner. It is mostly in shadow. Even when the sun shines brilliantly, it seldom touches the grand piano in the recess, or the folio music-books on the stand, or the book-shelves on the wall, or the unfinished picture of a blooming schoolgirl hanging over the chimney-piece; her flowing brown hair tied with a blue riband, and her beauty remarkable, for a quite childish, almost babyish touch of saucy discontent, comically conscious of itself. (There is not the least artistic merit in this picture, which is a mere daub; but it is clear that the painter has made it humorously—one might almost say, revengefully—like the original.)

"We shall miss you, Jasper, at the 'Alternate Musical Wednesdays' to-night; but no doubt you are best at home. Good-night. God bless you! 'Tell me, shep-herds, te-e-ell me; tell me-e-e, have you seen (have you seen, have you seen, have you seen) my-y-y Flo-o-ora-a pass this way!'" Melodiously good Minor Canon the Reverend Septimus Crisparkle thus delivers himself, in musical rhythm, as he withdraws his amiable face from the doorway and conveys it downstairs.

Sounds of recognition and greeting pass between the Reverend Septimus and somebody else, at the stair-foot. Mr. Jasper listens, starts from his chair, and catches a young fellow in his arms, exclaiming:

"My dear Edwin!"

"My dear Jack! So glad to see you!"

"Get off your greatcoat, bright boy, and sit down here in your own corner. Your feet are not wet? Pull your boots off. Do pull your boots off."

"My dear Jack, I am as dry as a bone. Don't moddley-coddley, there's a good fellow. I like anything better than being moddley-coddleyed."

With the check upon him of being unsympathetically restrained in a genial outburst of enthusiasm, Mr. Jasper stands still, and looks on intently at the young fellow, divesting himself of his outward coat, hat, gloves, and so forth. Once for all, a look of intentness and intensity—a look of hungry, exacting, watchful, and yet devoted affection—is always, now and ever afterwards, on the Jasper face whenever the Jasper face is addressed in this direction. And whenever it is so addressed, it is never, on this occasion or on any other, dividedly addressed; it is always concentrated.

"Now I am right, and now I'll take my corner, Jack. Any dinner, Jack?"

Mr. Jasper opens a door at the upper end of the room, and discloses a small inner room pleasantly lighted and prepared, wherein a comely dame is in the act of setting dishes on table.

"What a jolly old Jack it is!" cried the young fellow, with a clap of his hands. "Look here, Jack; tell me; whose birthday is it?"

"Not yours, I know," Mr. Jasper answers, pausing to consider.

"Not mine, you know? No; not mine, *I* know! Pussy's!"

Fixed as the look the young fellow meets is, there is yet in it some strange power of suddenly including the sketch over the chimneypiece.

"Pussy's, Jack! We must drink Many happy returns to her. Come, uncle; take your dutiful and sharp-set nephew in to dinner."

As the boy (for he is little more) lays a hand on Jasper's shoulder, Jasper cordially and gaily lays a hand on *his* shoulder, and so Marseillaise-wise they go in to dinner.

"And, Lord! here's Mrs. Tope!" cries the boy. "Lovelier than ever!"

"Never you mind me, Master Edwin," retorts the Verger's wife; "I can take care of myself."

"You can't. You're much too handsome. Give me a kiss because its Pussy's birthday."

"I'd Pussy you, young man, if I was Pussy, as you call her," Mrs. Tope blushingly retorts, after being saluted. "Your uncle's too much wrapt up in you, that's where it is. He makes so much of you, that it's my opinion you think you've only to call your Pussys by the dozen, to make 'em come."

"You forget, Mrs. Tope," Mr. Jasper interposes, taking his place at the table with a genial smile, "and so do you, Ned, that Uncle and Nephew are words prohibited here by common consent and express agreement. For what we are going to receive His holy name be praised!"

"Done like the Dean! Witness, Edwin Drood! Please to carve, Jack, for I can't."

This sally ushers in the dinner. Little to the present purpose, or to any purpose, is said, while it is in course of being disposed of. At length the cloth is drawn, and a dish of walnuts and a decanter of rich-coloured sherry are placed upon the table.

"I say! Tell me, Jack," the young fellow then flows on: "do you really and truly feel as if the mention of our relationship divided us at all! *I* don't."

"Uncles as a rule, Ned, are so much older than their nephews," is the reply, "that I have that feeling instinctively."

"As a rule! Ah, may-be! But what is a difference in age of half a dozen years or so? And some uncles, in large families, are even younger than their nephews. By George, I wish it was the case with us!"

"Why?"

"Because if it was, I'd take the lead with you, Jack, and be as wise as Begone, dull Care! that turned a young man gray, and Begone, dull Care! that turned an old man to clay.—Halloa, Jack! Don't drink."

"Why not?"

"Asks why not, on Pussy's birthday, and no Happy returns proposed! Pussy, Jack, and many of 'em! Happy returns, I mean."

Laying an affectionate and laughing touch on the boy's extended hand, as if it were at once his giddy head and his light heart, Mr. Jasper drinks the toast in silence.

"Hip, hip, hip, and nine times nine, and one to finish with, and all that, understood. Hooray, hooray, hooray!—And now, Jack, let's have a little talk about Pussy. Two pairs of nut-crackers? Pass me one, and take the other." Crack. "How's Pussy getting on, Jack?"

"With her music? Fairly."

"What a dreadfully conscientious fellow you are, Jack! But *I* know, Lord bless you! Inattentive, isn't she?"

"She can learn anything, if she will."

"*If* she will! Egad, that's it. But if she won't?"

Crack!—on Mr. Jasper's part.

"How's she looking, Jack?"

Mr. Jasper's concentrated face again includes the portrait as he returns: "Very like your sketch indeed."

"I *am* a little proud of it," says the young fellow, glancing up at the sketch with complacency, and then shutting one eye, and taking a corrected prospect of it over a level bridge of nut-crackers in the air: "Not badly hit off from memory. But I ought to have caught that expression pretty well, for I have seen it often enough."

Crack!—on Edwin Drood's part.

Crack!—on Mr. Jasper's part.

"In point of fact," the former resumes, after some silent dipping among his fragments of walnut with an air of pique, "I see it whenever I go to see Pussy. If I don't find it on her face, I leave it there.—You know I do, Miss Scornful Pert. Booh!" With a twirl of the nutcrackers at the portrait.

Crack! crack! crack. Slowly, on Mr. Jasper's part.

Crack. Sharply on the part of Edwin Drood.

Silence on both sides.

"Have you lost your tongue, Jack?"

"Have you found yours, Ned?"

"No, but really;—isn't it, you know, after all——"

Mr. Jasper lifts his dark eyebrows inquiringly.

"Isn't it unsatisfactory to be cut off from choice in such a matter? There, Jack! I tell you! If I could choose, I would choose Pussy from all the pretty girls in the world."

"But you have not got to choose."

"That's what I complain of. My dead and gone father and Pussy's dead and gone father must needs marry us together by anticipation. Why the—Devil, I was going to say, if it had been respectful to their memory—couldn't they leave us alone?"

"Tut, tut, dear boy," Mr. Jasper remonstrates, in a tone of gentle deprecation.

"Tut, tut? Yes, Jack, it's all very well for *you*. *You* can take it easily. *Your* life is not laid down to scale, and lined and dotted out for you, like a surveyor's plan. *You* have no uncomfortable suspicion that you are forced upon anybody, nor has anybody an uncomfortable suspicion that she is forced upon you, or that you are forced upon her. *You* can choose for yourself. Life, for *you*, is a plum with the natural bloom on; it hasn't been over-carefully wiped off for *you*——"

"Don't stop, dear fellow. Go on."

"Can I anyhow have hurt your feelings, Jack?"

"How can you have hurt my feelings?"

"Good Heaven, Jack, you look frightfully ill! There's a strange film come over your eyes."

Mr. Jasper, with a forced smile, stretches out his right hand, as if at once to disarm apprehension and gain time to get better. After a while he says faintly:

"I have been taking opium for a pain—an agony—that sometimes overcomes me. The effects of the medicine steal over me like a blight or a cloud, and pass. You see them in the act of passing; they will be gone directly. Look away from me. They will go all the sooner."

With a scared face the younger man complies by casting his eyes downward at the ashes on the hearth. Not relaxing his own gaze on the fire, but rather strengthening it with a fierce, firm grip upon his elbow-chair, the elder sits for a few moments rigid, and then, with thick drops standing on his forehead, and a sharp catch of his breath, becomes as he was before. On his so subsiding in his chair, his nephew gently and assiduously tends him while he quite recovers. When Jasper is restored, he lays a tender hand upon his nephew's shoulder, and, in a tone of voice less troubled than the purport of his words—indeed with something of raillery or banter in it—thus addresses him:

"There is said to be a hidden skeleton in every house; but you thought there was none in mine, dear Ned."

"Upon my life, Jack, I did think so. However, when I come to consider that even in Pussy's house—if she had one—and in mine—if I had one——"

"You were going to say (but that I interrupted you in spite of myself) what a quiet life mine is. No whirl and uproar around me, no distracting commerce or calculation, no risk, no change of place, myself devoted to the art I pursue, my business my pleasure."

"I really was going to say something of the kind, Jack; but you see, you, speaking of yourself, almost necessarily leave out much that I should have put in. For instance: I should have put in the foreground your being so much respected as Lay Precentor, or Lay Clerk, or whatever you call it, of this Cathedral; your enjoying the reputation of having done such wonders with the choir; your choosing your society, and holding such an independent position in this queer old place; your gift of teaching (why, even Pussy, who don't like being taught, says there never was such a Master as you are!), and your connexion."

"Yes; I saw what you were tending to. I hate it."

"Hate it, Jack?" (Much bewildered.)

"I hate it. The cramped monotony of my existence grinds me away by the grain. How does our service sound to you?"

"Beautiful! Quite celestial!"

"It often sounds to me quite devilish. I am so weary of it. The echoes of my own voice among the arches seem to mock me with my daily drudging round. No wretched monk who droned his life away in that gloomy place, before me, can have been more tired of it than I am. He could take for relief (and did take) to carving demons out of the stalls and seats and desks. What shall I do? Must I take to carving them out of my heart?"

"I thought you had so exactly found your niche in life, Jack," Edwin Drood returns, astonished, bending forward in his chair to lay a sympathetic hand on Jasper's knee, and looking at him with an anxious face.

"I know you thought so. They all think so."

"Well, I suppose they do," says Edwin, meditating aloud. "Pussy thinks so."

"When did she tell you that?"

"The last time I was here. You remember when. Three months ago."

"How did she phrase it?"

"O, she only said that she had become your pupil, and that you were made for your vocation."

The younger man glances at the portrait. The elder sees it in him.

"Anyhow, my dear Ned," Jasper resumes, as he shakes his head with a grave cheerfulness, "I must subdue myself to my vocation: which is much the same thing outwardly. It's too late to find another now. This is a confidence between us."

"It shall be sacredly preserved, Jack."

"I have reposed it in you, because——"

"I feel it, I assure you. Because we are fast friends, and because you love and trust me, as I love and trust you. Both hands, Jack."

As each stands looking into the other's eyes, and as the uncle holds the nephew's hands, the uncle thus proceeds:

"You know now, don't you, that even a poor monotonous chorister and grinder of music—in his niche—may be troubled with some stray sort of ambition, aspiration, restlessness, dissatisfaction, what shall we call it?"

"Yes, dear Jack."

"And you will remember?"

"My dear Jack, I only ask you, am I likely to forget what you have said with so much feeling?"

"Take it as a warning, then."

In the act of having his hands released, and of moving a step back, Edwin pauses for an instant to consider the application of these last words. The instant over, he says, sensibly touched:

"I am afraid I am but a shallow, surface kind of fellow, Jack, and that my headpiece is none of the best. But I needn't say I am young; and perhaps I shall not grow worse as I grow older. At all events, I hope I have something impressible within me, which feels—deeply feels—the disinterestedness of your painfully laying your inner self bare, as a warning to me."

Mr. Jasper's steadiness of face and figure becomes so marvellous that his breathing seems to have stopped.

"I couldn't fail to notice, Jack, that it cost you a great effort, and that you were very much moved, and very unlike your usual self. Of course I knew that you were extremely fond of me, but I really was not prepared for your, as I may say, sacrificing yourself to me in that way."

Mr. Jasper, becoming a breathing man again without the smallest stage of transition between the two extreme states, lifts his shoulders, laughs, and waves his right arm.

"No; don't put the sentiment away, Jack; please don't; for I am very much in earnest. I have no doubt that that unhealthy state of mind which you have so powerfully described is attended with some real suffering, and is hard to bear. But let me reassure you, Jack, as to the chances of its overcoming me. I don't think I am in the way of it. In some few months less than another year, you know, I shall carry Pussy off from school as Mrs. Edwin Drood. I shall then go engineering into the East, and Pussy with me. And although we have our little tiffs now, arising out of a certain unavoidable flatness that attends our love-making, owing to its end being all settled beforehand, still I have no doubt of our getting on capitally then, when it's done and can't be helped. In short, Jack, to go back to the old song I was freely quoting at dinner (and who knows old songs better than you ?), my wife shall dance, and I will sing, so merrily pass the day. Of Pussy's being beautiful there cannot be a doubt;—and when you are good besides, Little Miss Impudence," once more apostrophising the portrait, "I'll burn your comic likeness, and paint your music-master another."

Mr. Jasper, with his hand to his chin, and with an expression of musing benevolence on his face, has attentively watched every animated look and gesture attending the delivery of these words. He remains in that attitude after they are spoken, as if in a kind of fascination attendant on his strong interest in the youthful spirit that he loves so well. Then he says with a quiet smile:

"You won't be warned, then?"

"No, Jack."

"You can't be warned, then?"

"No, Jack, not by you. Besides that I don't really consider myself in danger, I don't like your putting yourself in that position."

"Shall we go and walk in the churchyard?"

"By all means. You won't mind my slipping out of it for half a moment to the Nuns' House, and leaving a parcel there? Only gloves for Pussy; as many pairs of gloves as she is years old to-day. Rather poetical, Jack?"

Mr. Jasper, still in the same attitude, murmurs: " 'Nothing half so sweet in life,' Ned!"

"Here's the parcel in my greatcoat-pocket. They must be presented to-night, or the poetry is gone. It's against regulations for me to call at night, but not to leave a packet. I am ready, Jack!"

Mr. Jasper dissolves his attitude, and they go out together.

CHAPTER III

THE NUNS' HOUSE

For sufficient reasons, which this narrative will itself unfold as it advances, a fictitious name must be bestowed upon the old Cathedral town. Let it stand in these pages as Cloisterham. It was once possibly known to the Druids by another name, and certainly to the Romans by another, and to the Saxons by another, and to the Normans by another; and a name more or less in the course of many centuries can be of little moment to its dusty chronicles.

An ancient city, Cloisterham, and no meet dwelling-place for any one with hankerings after the noisy world. A monotonous, silent city, deriving an earthy flavour throughout from its Cathedral crypt, and so abounding in vestiges of monastic graves, that the Cloisterham children grow small salads in the dust of abbots and abbesses, and make dirt-pies of nuns and friars; while every ploughman in its outlying fields renders to once puissant Lord Treasurers, Archbishops, Bishops, and such-like, the attention which the Ogre in the story-book desired to render to his unbidden visitor, and grinds their bones to make his bread.

A drowsy city, Cloisterham, whose inhabitants seem to suppose, with an inconsistency more strange than rare, that all its changes lie behind it, and that there are no more to come. A queer moral to derive from antiquity, yet older than any traceable antiquity. So silent are the streets of Cloisterham (though prone to echo on the smallest provocation) that of a summer-day the sunblinds of its shops scarce dare to flap in the south wind; while the sun-browned tramps, who pass along and stare, quicken their limp a little, that they may the sooner get beyond the confines of its oppressive respectability. This is a feat not difficult of achievement, seeing that the streets of Cloisterham city are little more than one narrow street by which you get into it and get out of it: the rest being mostly disappointing yards with pumps in them and no thoroughfare—exception made of the Cathedral-close, and a paved Quaker settlement, in colour and general conformation very like a Quakeress's bonnet, up in a shady corner.

In a word, a city of another and a bygone time is Cloisterham, with its hoarse Cathedral-bell, its hoarse rooks hovering about the Cathedral tower, its hoarser and less distinct rooks in the stalls far beneath. Fragments of old wall, saint's chapel, chapter-house, convent and monastery, have got incongruously or obstructively built into many of its houses and gardens, much as kindred jumbled notions have become incorporated into many of its citizens' minds. All things in it are of the past. Even its single pawnbroker takes in no pledges, nor has he for a long time, but offers vainly an unredeemed stock for sale, of which the costlier articles are dim and pale old watches apparently in a slow perspiration, tarnished sugar-tongs with ineffectual legs, and odd volumes of dismal books. The most abundant and the most agreeable evidences of progressing life in Cloisterham are the evidences of vegetable life in many gardens; even its drooping and despondent little theatre has its poor strip of garden, receiving the foul fiend, when he ducks from its stage into the infernal regions, among scarlet-beans or oyster-shells, according to the season of the year.

In the midst of Cloisterham stands the Nuns' House: a venerable brick edifice, whose present appellation is doubtless derived from the legend of its conventual uses. On the trim gate enclosing its old courtyard is a resplendent brass plate flashing forth the legend: "Seminary for Young Ladies. Miss Twinkleton." The house-front is so old and worn, and the brass plate is so shining and staring, that the general result has reminded imaginative strangers of a battered old beau with a large modern eye-glass stuck in his blind eye.

Whether the nuns of yore, being of a submissive rather than a stiff-necked generation, habitually bent their contemplative heads to avoid collision with the beams in the low ceilings of the many chambers of their House; whether they sat in its long low windows telling their beads for their mortification, instead of making necklaces of them for their adornment; whether they were ever walled up alive in odd angles and jutting gables of the building for having some ineradicable leaven of busy mother Nature in them which has kept the fermenting world alive ever since; these may be matters of interest to its haunting ghosts (if any), but constitute no item in Miss Twinkleton's half-yearly accounts. They are neither of Miss Twinkleton's inclusive regulars, nor of her extras. The lady who undertakes the poetical department of the establishment at so much (or so little) a quarter has no pieces in her list of recitals bearing on such unprofitable questions.

As, in some cases of drunkenness, and in others of animal magnetism, there are two states of consciousness which never clash, but each of which pursues its separate course as though it were continuous instead of broken (thus, if I hide my watch when I am drunk, I must be drunk again before I can remember where), so Miss Twinkleton has two distinct and separate phases of being. Every night, the moment the young ladies have retired to rest, does Miss Twinkleton smarten up her curls a little, brighten up her eyes a little, and become a sprightlier Miss Twinkleton than the young ladies have ever seen. Every night, at the same hour, does Miss Twinkleton resume the topics of the previous night, comprehending the tenderer scandal of Cloisterham, of which she has no knowledge whatever by day, and references to a certain season at Tunbridge Wells (airily called by Miss Twinkleton in this state of her existence "The Wells"), notably the season wherein a certain finished gentleman compassionately called by Miss Twinkleton, in this stage of her existence, "Foolish Mr. Porters") revealed a homage of the heart, whereof Miss Twinkleton, in her scholastic state of existence, is as ignorant as a granite pillar. Miss Twinkleton's companion in both states of existence, and equally adaptable to either, is one Mrs. Tisher: a deferential widow with a weak back, a chronic sigh, and a suppressed voice, who looks after the young ladies' wardrobes, and leads them to infer that she has seen better days. Perhaps this is the reason why it is an article of faith with the servants, handed down from race to race, that the departed Tisher was a hairdresser.

The pet pupil of the Nuns' House is Miss Rosa Bud, of course called Rosebud; wonderfully pretty, wonderfully childish, wonderfully whimsical. An awkward interest (awkward because romantic) attaches to Miss Bud in the minds of the young ladies, on account of its being known to them that a husband has been chosen for her by will and bequest, and that her guardian is bound down to bestow her on that husband when he comes of age. Miss Twinkleton, in her seminarial state of existence, has combated the romantic aspect of this destiny by affecting to shake her head over it behind Miss Bud's dimpled shoulders, and to brood on the unhappy lot of that doomed little victim. But with no better effect—possibly some unfelt touch of foolish Mr. Porters has undermined the endeavour—than to evoke from the young ladies an unanimous bedchamber cry of "O, what a pretending old thing Miss Twinkleton is, my dear!"

The Nuns' House is never in such a state of flutter as when this allotted husband calls to see little Rosebud. (It is unanimously understood by the young ladies that he is lawfully entitled to this privilege, and that if Miss Twinkleton disputed it, she would be instantly taken up and transported.) When his ring at the gate-bell is expected, or takes place, every young lady who can, under any pretence, look out of window, looks out of window; while every young lady who is "practising," practises out of time; and the French class becomes so demoralised that the mark goes round as briskly as the bottle at a convivial party in the last century.

On the afternoon of the day next after the dinner of two at the gatehouse, the bell is rung with the usual fluttering results.

"Mr. Edwin Drood to see Miss Rosa."

This is the announcement of the parlour-maid in chief. Miss Twinkleton, with an exemplary air of melancholy on her, turns to the sacrifice, and says, "You may go down, my dear." Miss Bud goes down, followed by all eyes.

Mr. Edwin Drood is waiting in Miss Twinkleton's own parlour: a dainty room, with nothing more directly scholastic in it than a terrestrial and a celestial globe. These expressive machines imply (to parents and guardians) that even when Miss Twinkleton retires into the bosom of privacy, duty may at any moment compel her to become a sort of Wandering Jewess, scouring the earth and soaring through the skies in search of knowledge for her pupils.

The last new maid, who has never seen the young gentleman Miss Rosa is engaged to, and who is making his acquaintance between the hinges of the open door, left open for the purpose, stumbles guiltily down the kitchen stairs, as a charming little apparition, with its face concealed by a little silk apron thrown over its head, glides into the parlour.

"O! it *is* so ridiculous!" says the apparition, stopping and shrinking. "Don't, Eddy!"

"Don't what, Rosa?"

"Don't come any nearer, please. It *is* so absurd."

"What is absurd, Rosa?"

"The whole thing is. It *is* so absurd to be an engaged orphan; and it *is* so absurd to have the girls and the servants scuttling about after one, like mice in the wainscot; and it *is* so absurd to be called upon!"

The apparition appears to have a thumb in the corner of its mouth while making this complaint.

"You give me an affectionate reception, Pussy, I must say."

"Well, I will in a minute, Eddy, but I can't just yet. How are you?" (very shortly.)

"I am unable to reply that I am much the better for seeing you, Pussy, inasmuch as I see nothing of you."

This second remonstrance brings a dark bright pouting eye out from a corner of the apron; but it swiftly becomes invisible again, as the apparition exclaims: "O good gracious! you have had half your hair cut off!"

"I should have done better to have had my head cut off, I think," says Edwin, rumpling the hair in question, with a fierce glance at the looking-glass, and giving an impatient stamp. " Shall I go?"

"No: you needn't go just yet, Eddy. The girls would all be asking questions why you went."

"Once for all, Rosa, will you uncover that ridiculous little head of yours and give me a welcome?"

The apron is pulled off the childish head, as its wearer replies: "You're very welcome, Eddy. There! I'm sure that's nice. Shake hands. No, I can't kiss you, because I've got an acidulated drop in my mouth."

"Are you at all glad to see me, Pussy?"

"O, yes, I'm dreadfully glad.—Go and sit down.—Miss Twinkleton."

It is the custom of that excellent lady, when these visits occur, to appear every three minutes, either in her own person or in that of Mrs. Tisher, and lay an offering on the shrine of Propriety by affecting to look for some desiderated article. On the present occasion Miss Twinkleton, gracefully gliding in and out, says in passing: "How do you do, Mr. Drood? Very glad indeed to have the pleasure. Pray excuse me. Tweezers. Thank you!"

"I got the gloves last evening, Eddy, and I like them very much. They are beauties."

"Well, that's something," the affianced replies, half grumbling.

"The smallest encouragement thankfully received. And how did you pass your birthday, Pussy?"

"Delightfully! Everybody gave me a present. And we had a feast. And we had a ball at night."

"A feast and a ball, eh? These occasions seem to go off tolerably well without me, Pussy."

"De-lightfully!" cries Rosa, in a quite spontaneous manner, and without the least pretence of reserve.

"Hah! And what was the feast?"

"Tarts, oranges, jellies, and shrimps."

"Any partners at the ball?"

"We danced with one another, of course, sir. But some of the girls made game to be their brothers. It *was* so droll!"

"Did anybody make game to be ——"

"To be you? O dear yes!" cries Rosa, laughing with great enjoyment. "That was the first thing done."

"I hope she did it pretty well," says Edwin rather doubtfully.

"O, it was excellent!—I wouldn't dance with you, you know."

Edwin scarcely seems to see the force of this; begs to know if he may take the liberty to ask why?

"Because I was so tired of you," returns Rosa. But she quickly adds, and pleadingly too, seeing displeasure in his face: "Dear Eddy, you were just as tired of me, you know."

"Did I say so, Rosa?"

"Say so! Do you ever say so? No, you only showed it. O, she did it so well!" cries Rosa, in a sudden ecstasy with her counterfeit betrothed.

"It strikes me that she must be a devilish impudent girl," says Edwin Drood. "And so, Pussy, you have passed your last birthday in this old house."

"Ah, yes!" Rosa clasps her hands, looks down with a sigh, and shakes her head.

"You seem to be sorry, Rosa."

"I am sorry for the poor old place. Somehow, I feel as if it would miss me, when I am gone so far away, so young."

"Perhaps we had better stop short, Rosa?"

She looks up at him with a swift bright look; next moment shakes her head, sighs, and looks down again.

"That is to say, is it, Pussy, that we are both resigned?"

She nods her head again, and after a short silence, quaintly bursts out with: "You know we must be married, and married from here, Eddy, or the poor girls will be so dreadfully disappointed!"

For the moment there is more of compassion, both for her and for himself, in her affianced husband's face, than there is of love. He checks the look, and asks: "Shall I take you out for a walk, Rosa dear?"

Rosa dear does not seem at all clear on this point, until her face, which has been comically reflective, brightens. "O, yes, Eddy; let us go for a walk! And I tell you what we'll do. You shall pretend that you are engaged to somebody else, and I'll pretend that I am not engaged to anybody, and then we shan't quarrel."

"Do you think that will prevent our falling out, Rosa?"

"I know it will. Hush! Pretend to look out of window—Mrs. Tisher!"

Through a fortuitous concourse of accidents, the matronly Tisher heaves in sight, says, in rustling through the room like the legendary ghost of a dowager in silken skirts: "I hope I see Mr. Drood well; though I needn't ask, if I may judge from his complexion. I trust I disturb no one; but there *was* a paper-knife—O, thank you, I am sure!" and disappears with her prize.

"One other thing you must do, Eddy, to oblige me," says Rosebud. "The moment we get into the street, you must put me outside, and keep close to the house yourself—squeeze and graze yourself against it."

"By all means, Rosa, if you wish it. Might I ask why?"

"O! because I don't want the girls to see you."

"It's a fine day; but would you like me to carry an umbrella up?"

"Don't be foolish, sir. You haven't got polished leather boots on," pouting, with one shoulder raised.

"Perhaps that might escape the notice of the girls, even if they did see me," remarks Edwin, looking down at his boots with a sudden distaste for them.

"Nothing escapes their notice, sir. And then I know what would happen. Some of them would begin reflecting on me by saying (for *they* are free) that they never will on any account engage themselves to lovers without polished leather boots. Hark! Miss Twinkleton. I'll ask for leave."

That discreet lady being indeed heard without, inquiring of nobody in a blandly conversational tone as she advances: "Eh? Indeed! Are you quite sure you saw my mother-of-pearl button-holder on the work-table in my room?" is at once solicited for walking leave, and graciously accords it. And soon the young couple go out of the Nuns' House, taking all precautions against the discovery of the so vitally defective boots of Mr. Edwin Drood: precautions, let us hope, effective for the peace of Mrs. Edwin Drood that is to be.

"Which way shall we take, Rosa?"

Rosa replies: "I want to go to the Lumps-of-Delight shop."

"To the——?"

"A Turkish sweetmeat, sir. My gracious me, don't you understand anything? Call yourself an Engineer, and not know *that*?"

"Why, how should I know it, Rosa?"

"Because I am very fond of them. But O! I forgot what we are to pretend. No, you needn't know anything about them; never mind."

So he is gloomily borne off to the Lumps-of-Delight shop, where Rosa makes her purchase, and, after offering some to him (which he rather indignantly declines) begins to partake of it with great zest: previously taking off and rolling up a pair of little pink gloves, like rose-leaves, and occasionally putting her little pink fingers to her rosy lips, to cleanse them from the Dust of Delight that comes off the Lumps.

"Now, be a good-tempered Eddy, and pretend. And so you are engaged?"

"And so I am engaged."

"Is she nice?"

"Charming."

"Tall?"

"Immensely tall!" Rosa being short.

"Must be gawky, I should think," is Rosa's quiet commentary.

"I beg your pardon; not at all," contradiction rising in him. "What is termed a fine woman; a splendid woman."

"Big nose, no doubt," is the quiet commentary again.

"Not a little one, certainly," is the quick reply. (Rosa's being a little one.)

"Long pale nose, with a red knob in the middle. *I* know the sort of nose," says Rosa, with a satisfied nod, and tranquilly enjoying the Lumps.

"You *don't* know the sort of nose, Rosa," with some warmth; "because it's nothing of the kind."

"Not a pale nose, Eddy?"

"No." Determined not to assent.

"A red nose? O! I don't like red noses. However, to be sure, she can always powder it."

"She would scorn to powder it," says Edwin, becoming heated.

"Would she? What a stupid thing she must be! Is she stupid in everything?"

"No; in nothing."

After a pause, in which the whimsically wicked face has not been unobservant of him, Rosa says:

"And this most sensible of creatures likes the idea of being carried off to Egypt; does she, Eddy?"

"Yes. She takes a sensible interest in triumphs of engineering skill: especially when they are to change the whole condition of an undeveloped country."

"Lor!" says Rosa, shrugging her shoulders, with a little laugh of wonder.

"Do you object," Edwin inquires, with a majestic turn of his eyes downward upon the fairy figure: "do you object, Rosa, to her feeling that interest?"

"Object? my dear Eddy! But really doesn't she hate boilers and things?"

"I can answer for her not being so idiotic as to hate Boilers," he returns, with angry emphasis; "though I cannot answer for her views about Things; really not understanding what Things are meant."

"But don't she hate Arabs, and Turks, and Fellahs, and people?"

"Certainly not." Very firmly.

"At least she *must* hate the Pyramids? Come, Eddy?"

"Why should she be such a little—tall, I mean—goose, as to hate the Pyramids, Rosa?"

"Ah! you should hear Miss Twinkleton," often nodding her head, and much enjoying the Lumps, "bore about them, and then you wouldn't ask. Tiresome old burying-grounds! Isises, and Ibises, and Cheopses, and Pharaohses; who cares about them? And then there was Belzoni, or somebody, dragged out by the legs, half-choked with bats and dust. All the girls say: Serve him right, and hope it hurt him, and wish he had been quite choked."

The two youthful figures, side by side, but not now arm-in-arm, wander discontentedly about the old Close; and each sometimes stops and slowly imprints a deeper footstep in the fallen leaves.

"Well!" says Edwin, after a lengthy silence. "According to custom. We can't get on, Rosa."

Rosa tosses her head, and says she don't want to get on.

"That's a pretty sentiment, Rosa, considering."

"Considering what?"

"If I say what, you'll go wrong again."

"*You*'ll go wrong, you mean, Eddy. Don't be ungenerous."

"Ungenerous! I like that!"

"Then I *don't* like that, and so I tell you plainly," Rosa pouts.

"Now, Rosa, I put it to you. Who disparaged my profession, my destination——"

"You are not going to be buried in the Pyramids, I hope?" she interrupts, arching her delicate eyebrows. "You never said you were. If you are, why haven't you mentioned it to me? I can't find out your plans by instinct."

"Now, Rosa, you know very well what I mean, my dear."

"Well then, why did you begin with your detestable red-nosed giantesses? And she would, she would, she would, she would, she WOULD powder it!" cries Rosa, in a little burst of comical contradictory spleen.

"Somehow or other, I never can come right in these discussions," says Edwin, sighing and becoming resigned.

"How is it possible, sir, that you ever can come right when you're always wrong? And as to Belzoni, I suppose he's dead;—I'm sure I hope he is—and how can his legs or his chokes concern you?"

"It is nearly time for your return, Rosa. We have not had a very happy walk, have we?"

"A happy walk? A detestably unhappy walk, sir. If I go up-stairs the moment I get in and cry till I can't take my dancing lessons, you are responsible, mind!"

"Let us be friends, Rosa."

"Ah!" cries Rosa, shaking her head and bursting into real tears, "I wish we *could* be friends! It's because we can't be friends, that we try one another so. I am a young little thing, Eddy, to have an old heartache; but I really, really have, sometimes. Don't be angry. I know you have one yourself too often. We should both of us have done better, if What is to be had been left What might have been. I am quite a little serious thing now, and not teasing you. Let each of

Under the Trees

us forbear, this one time, on our own account, and on the other's!"

Disarmed by this glimpse of a woman's nature in the spoilt child, though for an instant disposed to resent it as seeming to involve the enforced infliction of himself upon her, Edwin Drood stands watching her as she childishly cries and sobs, with both hands to the handkerchief at her eyes, and then—she becoming more composed, and indeed beginning in her young inconstancy to laugh at herself for having been so moved—leads her to a seat hard by, under the elm-trees.

"One clear word of understanding, Pussy dear. I am not clever out of my own line—now I come to think of it, I don't know that I am particularly clever in it—but I want to do right. There is not—there may be—I really don't see my way to what I want to say, but I must say it before we part—there is not any other young——"

"O no, Eddy! It's generous of you to ask me; but no, no, no!"

They have come very near to the Cathedral windows, and at this moment the organ and the choir sound out sublimely. As they sit listening to the solemn swell, the confidence of last night rises in young Edwin Drood's mind, and he thinks how unlike this music is to that discordance.

"I fancy I can distinguish Jack's voice," is his remark in a low tone in connection with the train of thought.

"Take me back at once, please," urges his Affianced, quickly laying her light hand upon his wrist. "They will all be coming out directly; let us get away. O, what a resounding choir! But don't let us stop to listen to it; let us get away!"

Her hurry is over as soon as they have passed out of the Close. They go arm-in-arm now, gravely and deliberately enough, along the old High-Street, to the Nuns' House. At the gate, the street being within sight empty, Edwin bends down his face to Rosebud's.

She remonstrates, laughing, and is a childish schoolgirl again.

"Eddy, no! I'm too sticky to be kissed. But give me your hand, and I'll blow a kiss into that."

He does so. She breathes a light breath into it and asks, retaining it and looking into it:—

"Now say, what do you see?"

"See Rosa?"

"Why, I thought you Egyptian boys could look into a hand and see all sorts of phantoms. Can't you see a happy Future?"

For certain, neither of them sees a happy Present, as the gate opens and closes, and one goes in. and the other goes away.

CHAPTER IV

MR. SAPSEA

ACCEPTING the Jackass as the type of self-sufficient stupidity and conceit—a custom, perhaps, like some few other customs, more conventional than fair—then the purest Jackass in Cloisterham is Mr. Thomas Sapsea, Auctioneer.

Mr. Sapsea "dresses at" the Dean; has been bowed to for the Dean, in mistake; has even been spoken to in the street as My Lord, under the impression that he was the Bishop come down unexpectedly, without his chaplain. Mr. Sapsea is very proud of this, and of his voice, and of his style. He has even (in selling landed property) tried the experiment of slightly intoning in his pulpit, to make himself more like what he takes to be the genuine ecclesiastical article. So, in ending a Sale by Public Auction, Mr. Sapsea finishes off with an air of bestowing a benediction on the assembled brokers, which leaves the real Dean—a modest and worthy gentleman—far behind.

Mr. Sapsea has many admirers; indeed, the proposition is carried by a large local majority, even including non-believers in his wisdom, that he is a credit to Cloisterham. He possesses the great qualities of being portentous and dull, and of having a roll in his speech, and another roll in his gait; not to mention a certain gravely flowing action with his hands, as if he were presently going to Confirm the individual with whom he holds discourse. Much nearer sixty years of age than fifty, with a flowing outline of stomach, and horizontal creases in his waistcoat; reputed to be rich; voting at elections in the strictly respectable interest; morally satisfied that nothing but he himself has grown since he was a baby; how can dunder-headed Mr. Sapsea be otherwise than a credit to Cloisterham, and society?

Mr. Sapsea's premises are in the High-street, over against the Nuns' House. They are of about the period of the Nuns' House, irregularly modernised here and there, as steadily deteriorating generations found, more and more, that they preferred air and light to Fever and the Plague. Over the doorway is a wooden effigy, about half life-size, representing Mr. Sapsea's father, in a curly wig and toga, in the act of selling. The chastity of the idea, and the natural appearance of the little finger, hammer, and pulpit have been much admired.

Mr. Sapsea sits in his dull ground-floor sitting-room, giving first on his paved back yard; and then on his railed-off garden. Mr. Sapsea has a bottle of port wine on a table before the fire—the fire is an early luxury, but pleasant on the cool, chilly autumn evening—and is characteristically attended by his portrait, his eight-day clock, and his weather-glass. Characteristically, because he would uphold himself against mankind, his weather-glass against weather, and his clock against time.

By Mr. Sapsea's side on the table are a writing-desk and writing materials. Glancing at a scrap of manuscript, Mr. Sapsea reads it to himself with a lofty air, and then, slowly pacing the room with his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, repeats it from memory; so internally, though with much dignity, that the word "Ethelinda" is alone audible.

There are three clean wineglasses in a tray on the table. His serving-maid entering, and announcing "Mr. Jasper is come, sir," Mr. Sapsea waves "Admit him," and draws two wineglasses from the rank, as being claimed.

"Glad to see you, sir. I congratulate myself on having the honour of receiving you here for the first time." Mr. Sapsea does the honours of his house in this wise.

"You are very good. The honour is mine and the self-congratulation is mine."

"You are pleased to say so, sir. But I do assure you that it is a satisfaction to me to receive you in my humble home. And that is what I would not say to everybody." Ineffable loftiness on Mr. Sapsea's part accompanies these words, as leaving the sentence to be understood: "You will not easily believe that your society can be a satisfaction to a man like myself; nevertheless, it is."

"I have for some time desired to know you, Mr. Sapsea."

"And I, sir, have long known you by reputation as a man of taste. Let me fill your glass. I will give you, sir," says Mr. Sapsea, filling his own:

"When the French come over,
May we meet them at Dover!"

This was a patriotic toast in Mr. Sapsea's infancy, and he is therefore fully convinced of its being appropriate to any subsequent era.

"You can scarcely be ignorant, Mr. Sapsea," observes Jasper, watching the auctioneer with a smile as the latter stretches out his legs before the fire, "that you know the world."

"Well, sir," is the chuckling reply, "I think I know something of it; something of it."

"Your reputation for that knowledge has always interested and surprised me, and made me wish to know you. For Cloisterham is a little place. Cooped up in it myself, I know nothing beyond it, and feel it to be a very little place."

"If I have not gone to foreign countries, young man," Mr. Sapsea begins, and then stops: "You will excuse me calling you young man, Mr. Jasper? You are much my junior."

"By all means."

"If I have not gone to foreign countries, young man, foreign countries have come to me. They have come to me in the way of business, and I have improved upon my opportunities. Put it that I take an inventory, or make a catalogue. I see a French clock. I never saw him before, in my life, but I instinctly lay my finger on him and say 'Paris!' I see some cups and saucers of Chinese make, equally strangers to me personally: I put my finger on them, then and there, and I say 'Pekin, Nankin, and Canton.' It is the same with Japan, with Egypt, and with bamboo and sandal-wood from the East Indies; I put my finger on them all. I have put my finger on the North Pole before now, and said 'Spear of Esquimaux make, for half a pint of pale sherry!"

"Really? A very remarkable way, Mr. Sapsea, of acquiring a knowlege of men and things."

"I mention it, sir," Mr. Sapsea rejoins, with unspeakable complacency, "because, as I say, it don't do to boast of what you are; but show how you came to be it, and then you prove it."

"Most interesting. We were to speak of the late Mrs. Sapsea."

"We were, sir." Mr. Sapsea fills both glasses, and takes the decanter into safe keeping again. "Before I consult your opinion as a man of taste on this little trifle "—holding it up—"which is *but* a trifle, and still has required some thought, sir, some little fever of the brow, I ought perhaps to describe the character of the late Mrs. Sapsea, now dead three quarters of a year."

Mr. Jasper, in the act of yawning behind his wineglass, puts down that screen and calls up a look of interest. It is a little impaired in its expressiveness by his having a shut-up gape still to dispose of, with watering eyes.

"Half a dozen years ago, or so," Mr. Sapsea proceeds, "when I had enlarged my mind up to—I will not say to what it now is, for that might seem to aim at too much, but up to a pitch of wanting another mind to be absorbed in it—I cast my eye about me for a nuptial partner. Because, as I say, it is not good for man to be alone."

Mr. Jasper appears to commit this original idea to memory.

"Miss Brobity at that time kept, I will not call it the rival establishment to the establishment at the Nuns' House opposite, but I will call it the other parallel establishment down town. The world did have it that she showed a passion for attending my sales, when they took place on half holidays or in vacation time. The world did put it about, that she admired my style. The world did notice that as time flowed by, my style became traceable in the dictation-exercises of Miss Brobity's pupils. Young man, a whisper even sprang up in obscure malignity, that one ignorant and besotted Churl (a parent) so committed himself as to object to it by name. But I do not believe this. For is it likely that any human creature in his right senses would so lay himself open to be pointed at, by what I call the finger of scorn?"

Mr. Jasper shakes his head. Not in the least likely. Mr. Sapsea, in a grandiloquent state of absence of mind, seems to refill his visitor's glass, which is full already; and does really refill his own, which is empty.

Miss Brobity's Being, young man, was deeply imbued with homage to Mind. She revered Mind, when launched, or, as I say, precipitated, on an extensive knowledge of the world. When I made my proposal, she did me the honour to be so overshadowed with a species of Awe, as to be able to articulate only the two words, "O Thou!" meaning myself. Her limpid blue eyes were fixed upon me, her semi-transparent hands were clasped together, pallor overspread her aquiline features, and, though encouraged to proceed, she never did proceed a word further. I disposed of the parallel establishment by private contract, and we became as nearly one as could be expected under the circumstances. But she never could, and she never did, find a phrase satisfactory to her perhaps-too-favourable estimate of my intellect. To the very last (feeble action of liver), she addressed me in the same unfinished terms."

Mr. Jasper has closed his eyes as the auctioneer has deepened his voice. He now abruptly opens them, and says, in unison with the deepened voice "Ah!"—rather as if stopping himself on the extreme verge of adding—"men!"

"I have been since," says Mr. Sapsea, with his legs stretched out, and solemnly enjoying himself with the wine and the fire, "what you behold me; I have been since a solitary mourner; I have been since, as I say, wasting my evening conversation on the desert air. I will not say that I have reproached myself; but there have been times when I have asked myself the question: What if her husband had been nearer on a level with her? If she had not had to look up quite so high, what might the stimulating action have been upon the liver?"

Mr. Jasper says, with an appearance of having fallen into dreadfully low spirits, that he " supposes it was to be."

"We can only suppose so, sir," Mr. Sapsea coincides. "As I say, Man proposes, Heaven disposes. It may or may not be putting the same thought in another form; but that is the way I put it."

Mr. Jasper murmurs assent.

"And now, Mr. Jasper," resumes the auctioneer, producing his scrap of manuscript, "Mrs. Sapsea's monument having had full time to settle and dry, let me take your opinion, as a man of taste, on the inscription I have (as I before remarked, not without some little fever of the brow) drawn out for it. Take it in your own hand. The setting out of the lines requires to be followed with the eye, as well as the contents with the mind."

Mr. Jasper complying, sees and reads as follows:

ETHELINDA,
Reverential Wife of
MR. THOMAS SAPSEA,
AUCTIONEER, VALUER, ESTATE AGENT, &c.,
OF THIS CITY,
Whose Knowledge of the World,
Though somewhat extensive,
Never brought him acquainted with
A SPIRIT
More capable of
LOOKING UP TO HIM.
STRANGER, PAUSE
And ask thyself the Question,
CANST THOU DO LIKEWISE
If Not,
WITH A BLUSH RETIRE.

Mr. Sapsea having risen and stationed himself with his back to the fire, for the purpose of observing the effect of these lines on the countenance of a man of taste, consequently has his face towards the door, when his serving-maid, again appearing, announces, "Durdles is come, sir!" He promptly draws forth and fills the third wineglass, as being now claimed, and replies, "Show Durdles in."

"Admirable!" quoth Mr. Jasper, handing back the paper.

"You approve, sir?"

"Impossible not to approve. Striking, characteristic, and complete."

The auctioneer inclines his head, as one accepting his due and giving a receipt; and invites the entering Durdles to take off that glass of wine (handing the same), for it will warm him.

Durdles is a stonemason; chiefly in the gravestone, tomb, and monument way, and wholly of their colour from head to foot. No man is better known in Cloisterham. He is the chartered libertine of the place. Fame trumpets him a wonderful workman—which, for aught that anybody knows, he may be (as he never works); and a wonderful sot—which everybody knows he is. With the Cathedral crypt he is better acquainted than any living authority; it may even be than any dead one. It is said that the intimacy of this acquaintance began in his habitually resorting to that secret place, to lock-out the Cloisterham boy-populace, and sleep off the fumes of liquor: he having ready access to the Cathedral, as contractor for rough repairs. Be this as it may, he does know much about it, and, in the demolition of impedimental fragments of wall, buttress, and pavement, has seen strange sights. He often speaks of himself in the third person; perhaps, being a little misty as to his own identity, when he narrates; perhaps impartially, adopting the Cloisterham nomenclature in reference to a character of acknowledged distinction. Thus he will say, touching his strange sights: "Durdles come upon the old chap," in reference to a buried magnate of ancient time and high degree, "by striking right into the coffin with his pick. The old chap gave Durdles a look with his open eyes, as much as to say, 'Is your name Durdles? Why, my man, I've been waiting for you a devil of a time.' And then he turned to powder." With a two-foot rule always in his pocket, and a mason's hammer all but always in his hand, Durdles goes continually sounding and tapping all about and about the Cathedral; and whenever he says to Tope: "Tope, here's another old 'un in here!" Tope announces it to the Dean as an established discovery.

In a suit of coarse flannel with horn buttons, a yellow neckerchief with draggled ends, an old hat more russet-coloured than black and laced boots of the hue of his stony calling, Durdles leads a hazy, gipsy sort of life, carrying his dinner about with him in a small bundle, and sitting on all manner of tombstones to dine. This dinner of Durdles's has become quite a Cloisterham institution: not only because of his never appearing in public without it, but because of its having been, on certain renowned occasions, taken into custody along with Durdles (as drunk and incapable), and exhibited before the Bench of Justices at the townhall. These occasions, however, have been few and far apart: Durdles being as seldom drunk as sober. For the rest, he is an old bachelor, and he lives in a little antiquated hole of a house that was never finished: supposed to be built, so far, of stones stolen from the city wall. To this abode there is an approach, ankle-deep in stone chips, resembling a petrified grove of tombstones, urns, draperies, and broken columns, in all stages of sculpture. Herein two journeymen incessantly chip, while other two journeymen, who face each other, incessantly saw stone; dipping as regularly in and out of their sheltering sentry-boxes, as if they were mechanical figures emblematical of Time and Death.

To Durdles, when he had consumed his glass of port, Mr. Sapsea intrusts that precious effort of his Muse. Durdles unfeelingly takes out his two-foot rule, and measures the lines calmly, alloying them with stone-grit.

"This is for the monument, is it, Mr. Sapsea?"

"The inscription. Yes." Mr. Sapsea waits for its effect on a common mind.

"It'll come in to a eighth of a inch," says Durdles. "Your servant, Mr. Jasper. Hope I see you well."

"How are you, Durdles?"

"I've got a touch of the Tombatism on me, Mr. Jasper, but that I must expect."

"You mean the Rheumatism," says Sapsea, in a sharp tone. (He is nettled by having his composition so mechanically received.)

"No, I don't. I mean, Mr. Sapsea, the Tombatism. It's another sort from Rheumatism. Mr. Jasper knows what Durdles means. You get among them Tombs afore it's well light on a winter morning, and keep on, as the Catechism says, a-walking in the same all the days of your life, and *you'll* know what Durdles means."

"It is a bitter cold place," Mr. Jasper assents, with an antipathetic shiver.

"And if it's bitter cold for you, up in the chancel, with a lot of live breath smoking out about you, what the bitterness is to Durdles, down in the crypt among the earthy damps there, and the dead breath of the old 'uns," returns that individual, "Durdles leaves you to judge.—Is this to be put in hand at once, Mr. Sapsea?"

Mr. Sapsea, with an Author's anxiety to rush into publication, replies that it cannot be out of hand too soon.

"You had better let me have the key then," says Durdles.

"Why, man, it is not to be put inside the monument!"

"Durdles knows where it's to be put, Mr. Sapsea; no man better. Ask 'ere a man in Cloisterham whether Durdles knows his work."

Mr. Sapsea rises, takes a key from a drawer, unlocks an iron safe let into the wall, and takes from it another key.

"When Durdles puts a touch or a finish upon his work, no matter where, inside or outside, Durdles likes to look at his work all round, and see that his work is a-doing him credit," Durdles explains, doggedly.

The key proffered him by the bereaved widower being a large one, he slips his two-foot rule into a side-pocket of his flannel trousers made for it, and deliberately opens his flannel coat, and opens the mouth of a large breast-pocket within it before taking the key to place it in that repository.

"Why, Durdles!" exclaims Jasper, looking on amused, "you are undermined with pockets!"

"And I carries weight in 'em too, Mr. Jasper. Feel those!" producing two other large keys.

"Hand me Mr. Sapsea's likewise. Surely this is the heaviest of the three."

"You'll find 'em much of a muchness, I expect," says Durdles. "They all belong to monuments. They'll all open Durdle's work. Durdles keeps the keys of his work mostly. Not that they're much used."

"By the bye," it comes into Jasper's mind to say, as he idly examines the keys, "I have been going to ask you, many a day and have always forgotten. You know they sometimes call you Stony Durdles, don't you?"

"Cloisterham knows me as Durdles, Mr. Jasper."

"I am aware of that, of course. But the boys sometimes——"

"O! if you mind them young imps of boys——" Durdles gruffly interrupts.

"I don't mind them any more than you do. But there was a discussion the other day among the Choir, whether Stony stood for Tony;" clinking one key against another.

("Take care of the wards, Mr. Jasper.")

"Or whether Stony stood for Stephen;" clinking with a change of keys.

("You can't make a pitch pipe of 'em, Mr. Jasper.")

"Or whether the name comes from your trade. How stands the fact?"

Mr. Jasper weighs the three keys in his hand, lifts his head from his idly stooping attitude over the fire, and delivers the keys to Durdles with an ingenuous and friendly face.

But the stony one is a gruff one likewise, and that hazy state of his is always an uncertain state, highly conscious of its dignity, and prone to take offence. He drops his two keys back into his pocket one by one, and buttons them up; he takes his dinner-bundle from the chair-back on which he hung it when he came in; he distributes the weight he carries, by tying the third key up in it, as though he were an Ostrich and liked to dine off cold iron; and he gets out of the room, deigning no word of answer.

Mr. Sapsea then proposes a hit at backgammon, which, seasoned with his own improving conversation, and terminating in a supper of cold roast beef and salad, beguiles the golden evening until pretty late. Mr. Sapsea's wisdom being, in its delivery to mortals, rather of the diffuse than the epigrammatic order, is by no means expended even then; but his visitor intimates that he will come back for more of the precious commodity on future occasions, and Mr. Sapsea lets him off for the present, to ponder on the instalment he carries away.

CHAPTER V

MR. DURDLES AND FRIEND

John Jasper, on his way home through the Close, is brought to a stand-still by the spectacle of Stony Durdles, dinner-bundle and all, leaning his back against the iron railing of the burial-ground enclosing it from the old cloister-arches; and a hideous small boy in rags flinging stones at him as a well-defined mark in the moonlight. Sometimes the stones hit him, and sometimes they miss him, but Durdles seems indifferent to either fortune. The hideous small boy, on the contrary, whenever he hits Durdles, blows a whistle of triumph through a jagged gap, convenient for the purpose, in the front of his mouth, where half his teeth are wanting; and whenever he misses him, yelps out "Mulled agin!" and tries to atone for the failure by taking a more correct and vicious aim.

"What are you doing to the man?" demands Jasper, stepping out into the moonlight from the shade.

"Making a cock-shy of him," replies the hideous small boy.

"Give me those stones in your hand."

"Yes, I'll give 'em you down your throat, if you come a-ketching hold of me," says the small boy, shaking himself loose, and backing. "I'll smash your eye, if you don't look out!"

"Baby-Devil that you are, what has the man done to you?"

"He won't go home."

"What is that to you?"

"He gives me a 'apenny to pelt him home if I ketches him out too late," says the boy. And then chants, like a little savage, half stumbling and half dancing among the rags and laces of his dilapidated boots:—

"Widdy widdy wen!
I—ket—ches—Im—out—ar—ter—ten,
Widdy widdy wy!
Then—E—don't—go—then—I—shy—
Widdy Widdy Wake-cock warning!"

—with a comprehensive sweep on the last word, and one more delivery at Durdles.

This would seem to be a poetical note of preparation, agreed upon, as a caution to Durdles to stand clear if he can, or to betake himself homeward.

John Jasper invites the boy with a beck of his head to follow him (feeling it hopeless to drag him, or coax him), and crosses to the iron railing where the Stony (and stoned) One is profoundly meditating.

"Do you know this thing, this child?" asks Jasper, at a loss for a word that will define this thing.

"Deputy," said Durdles, with a nod.

"Is that its—his—name?"

"Deputy," assents Durdles.

"I'm man-servant up at the Traveller's Twopenny in Gas Works Garding," this thing explains. "All us man-servants at Travellers' Lodgings is named Deputy. When we're chock full and the Travellers is all a-bed I come out for my 'elth." Then withdrawing into the road and taking aim, he resumes:—

"Widdy widdy wen!
I—ket—ches—Im—out—ar—ter——"

"Hold your hand," cries Jasper, "and don't throw while I stand so near him, or I'll kill you! Come, Durdles; let me walk home with you to-night. Shall I carry your bundle?"

"Not on any account," replies Durdles, adjusting it. "Durdles was making his reflections here when you come up, sir, surrounded by his works, like a poplar Author.—Your own brother-in-law;" introducing a sarcophagus within the railing, white and cold in the moonlight. "Mrs. Sapsea;" introducing the monument of that devoted wife. "Late Incumbent;" introducing the Reverend Gentleman's broken column. "Departed Assessed Taxes;" introducing a vase and towel, standing on what might represent the cake of soap. "Former pastry-cook and Muffin-maker, much respected;" introducing gravestone. "All safe and sound here, sir, and all Durdle's work. Of the common folk, that is merely bundled up in turf and brambles, the less said the better. A poor lot, soon forgot."

"This creature, Deputy, is behind us," says Jasper, looking back. "Is he to follow us?"

The relations between Durdles and Deputy are of a capricious kind; for, on Durdles's turning himself about with the slow gravity of beery soddenness, Deputy makes a pretty wide circuit into the road and stands on the defensive.

"You never cried Widdy Warning before you begun to-night," says Durdles, unexpectedly reminded of, or imagining, an injury.

"Yer lie, I did," says Deputy, in his only form of polite contradiction.

"Own brother, sir," observes Durdles, turning himself about again, and as unexpectedly forgetting his offence as he had recalled or conceived it; "own brother to Peter the Wild Boy! But I give him an object in life."

"At which he takes aim?" Mr. Jasper suggests.

"That's it, sir," returns Durdles, quite satisfied; "at which he takes aim. I took him in hand and gave him an object. What was he before? A destroyer. What work did he do? Nothing but destruction. What did he earn by it? Short terms in Cloisterham Jail. Not a person, not a piece of property, not a winder, not a horse, nor a dog, nor a cat, nor a bird, nor a fowl, nor a pig, but what he stoned, for want of an enlightened object. I put that enlightened object before him, and now he can turn his honest halfpenny by the three penn'orth a week."

"I wonder he has no competitors."

"He has plenty, Mr. Jasper, but he stones 'em all away. Now, I don't know what this scheme of mine comes to," pursues Durdles, considering about it with the same sodden gravity; "I don't know what you may precisely call it. It ain't a sort of a—scheme of a—National Education?"

"I should say not," replied Jasper.

"*I* should say not," assents Durdles; "then we won't try to give it a name."

"He still keeps behind us," repeats Jasper, looking over his shoulder; "is he to follow us?"

"We can't help going round by the Traveller's Twopenny, if we go the short way, which is the back way," Durdles answers, "and we'll drop him there."

So they go on; Deputy, as a rear rank one, taking open order, and invading the silence of the hour and place by stoning every wall, post, pillar, and other inanimate object, by the deserted way.

"Is there anything new down in the crypt, Durdles?" asks John Jasper.

"Anything old, I think you mean," growls Durdles. "It ain't a spot for novelty."

"Any new discovery on your part, I meant."

"There's a old 'un under the seventh pillar on the left as you go down the broken steps of the little underground chapel as formerly was; I make him out (so fur as I've made him out yet) to be one of them old 'uns with a crook. To judge from the size of the passages in the walls, and of the steps and doors, by which they come and went, them crooks must have been a good deal in the way of the old 'uns! Two on 'em meeting promiscuous must have hitched one another by the mitre pretty often, I should say."

Without any endeavour to correct the literality of this opinion, Jasper surveys his companion—covered from head to foot with old mortar, lime, and stone grit—as though he, Jasper, were getting imbued with a romantic interest in his weird life.

"Yours is a curious existence."

Without furnishing the least clue to the question, whether he receives this as a compliment or as quite the reverse, Durdles gruffly answers: "Yours is another."

"Well! inasmuch as my lot is cast in the same old earthy, chilly, never-changing place, Yes. But there is much more mystery and interest in your connection with the Cathedral than in mine. Indeed, I am beginning to have some idea of asking you to take me on as a sort of student, or free 'prentice, under you, and to let me go about with you sometimes, and see some of these odd nooks in which you pass your days."

The Stony One replies, in a general way, "All right. Everybody knows where to find Durdles, when he's wanted." Which, if not strictly true, is approximately so, if taken to express that Durdles may always be found in a state of vagabondage somewhere.

"What I dwell upon most," says Jasper, pursuing his subject of romantic interest, "is the remarkable accuracy with which you would seem to find out where people are buried.—What is the matter? That bundle is in your way; let me hold it."

Durdles has stopped and backed a little (Deputy, attentive to all his movements, immediately skirmishing into the road), and was looking about for some ledge or corner to place his bundle on, when thus relieved of it.

"Just you give me my hammer out of that," says Durdles, "and I'll show you."

Clink, clink. And his hammer is handed him.

"Now, lookee here. You pitch your note, don't you, Mr. Jasper?"

"Yes."

"So I sound for mine. I take my hammer, and I tap." (Here he strikes the pavement, and the attentive Deputy skirmishes at a rather wider range, as supposing that his head may be in requisition.) "I tap, tap, tap. Solid! I go on tapping. Solid still! Tap again. Holloa! Hollow! Tap again, persevering. Solid in hollow! Tap, tap, tap, to try it better. Solid in hollow; and inside solid, hollow again! There you are! Old 'un crumbled away in stone coffin, in vault!"

"Astonishing!"

"I have even done this," says Durdles, drawing out his two-foot rule (Deputy meanwhile skirmishing nearer, as suspecting that Treasure may be about to be discovered, which may somehow lead to his own enrichment, and the delicious treat of the discoverers being hanged by the neck, on his evidence, until they are dead). "Say that hammer of mine's a wall—my work. Two; four; and two is six," measuring on the pavement. "Six foot inside that wall is Mrs. Sapsea."

"Not really Mrs. Sapsea?"

"Say Mrs. Sapsea. Her wall's thicker, but say Mrs. Sapsea. Durdles taps that wall represented by that hammer, and says, after good sounding: 'Something betwixt us!' Sure enough, some rubbish has been left in that same six-foot space by Durdle's men!"

Jasper opines that such accuracy "is a gift."

"I wouldn't have it at a gift," returns Durdles, by no means receiving the observation in good part. "I worked it out for myself. Durdles comes by *his* knowledge through grubbing deep for it, and having it up by the roots when it don't want to come.—Holloa you Deputy!"

"Widdy!" is Deputy's shrill response, standing off again.

"Catch that ha'penny. And don't let me see any more of you tonight, after we come to the Travellers' Twopenny."

"Warning!" returns Deputy, having caught the halfpenny, and appearing by this mystic word to express his assent to the arrangement.

They have but to cross what was once the vineyard belonging to what was once the Monastery, to come into the narrow back lane wherein stands the crazy wooden house of two low stories currently known as the Traveller's Twopenny:—a house all warped and distorted, like the morals of the travellers, with scant remains of a lattice-work porch over the door, and also of a rustic fence before its stamped-out garden; by reason of the travellers being so bound to the premises by a tender sentiment (or so fond of having a fire by the roadside in the course of the day), that they can never be persuaded or threatened into departure, without violently possessing themselves of some wooden forget-me-not, and bearing it off.

The semblance of an inn is attempted to be given to this wretched place by fragments of conventional red curtaining in the windows, which rags are made muddily transparent in the night-season by feeble lights of rush or cotton dip burning dully in the close air of the inside. As Durdles and Jasper come near, they are addressed by an inscribed paper lantern over the door, setting forth the purport of the house. They are also addressed by some half-dozen other hideous small boys—whether twopenny lodgers or followers or hangers-on of such, who knows!—who, as if attracted by some carrion-scent of Deputy in the air, start into the moonlight, as vultures might gather in the desert, and instantly fall to stoning him and one another.

"Stop, you young brutes," cries Jasper angrily, "and let us go by!"

This remonstrance being received with yells and flying stones, according to a custom of late years comfortably established among the police regulations of our English communities, where Christians are stoned on all sides, as if the days of Saint Stephen were revived, Durdles remarks of the young savages, with some point, that "they haven't got an object," and leads the way down the lane.

At the corner of the lane, Jasper, hotly enraged, checks his companion and looks back. All is silent. Next moment: a stone coming rattling at his hat, and a distant yell of "Wake-cock! Warning!" followed by a crow, as from some infernally hatched Chanticleer, apprising him under whose victorious fire he stands, he turns the corner into safety, and takes Durdles home: Durdles stumbling among the litter of his stony yard as if he were going to turn head foremost into one of the unfinished tombs.

John Jasper returns by another way to his gatehouse, and entering softly with his key, finds his fire still burning. He takes from a locked press a peculiar-looking pipe, which he fills—but not with tobacco—and, having adjusted the contents of the bowl, very carefully, with a little instrument, ascends an inner staircase of only a few steps, leading to two rooms. One of these is his own sleeping chamber: the other is his nephew's. There is a light in each.

His nephew lies asleep, calm and untroubled. John Jasper stands looking down upon him, his unlighted pipe in his hand, for some time, with a fixed and deep attention. Then, hushing his footsteps, he passes to his own room, lights his pipe, and delivers himself to the Spectres it invokes at midnight.

CHAPTER VI

PHILANTHROPY IN MINOR CANON CORNER

THE Reverend Septimus Crisparkle (Septimus, because six little brother Crisparkles before him went out, one by one, as they were born, like six weak little rushlights, as they were lighted), having broken the thin morning ice near Cloisterham Weir with his amiable head, much to the invigoration of his frame, was now assisting his circulation by boxing at a looking-glass with great science and prowess. A fresh and healthy portrait the looking-glass presented of the Reverend Septimus, feinting and dodging with the utmost artfulness, and hitting out from the shoulder with the utmost straightness, while his radiant features teemed with innocence, and soft-hearted benevolence beamed from his boxing-gloves.

It was scarcely breakfast-time yet, for Mrs. Crisparkle—mother, not wife of the Reverend Septimus—was only just down, and waiting for the urn. Indeed, the Reverend Septimus left off at this very moment to take the pretty old lady's entering face between his boxing-gloves and kiss it. Having done so with tenderness, the Reverend Septimus turned to again, countering with his left, and putting in his right, in a tremendous manner.

"I say, every morning of my life, that you'll do it at last, Sept," remarked the old lady, looking on; "and so you will."

"Do what, Ma dear?"

"Break the pier-glass, or burst a blood-vessel."

"Neither, please God, Ma dear. Here's wind, Ma. Look at this!"

In a concluding round of great severity, the Reverend Septimus administered and escaped all sorts of punishment, and wound up by getting the old lady's cap into Chancery—such is the technical term used in scientific circles by the learned in the Noble Art—with a lightness of touch that hardly stirred the lightest lavender or cherry riband on it. Magnanimously releasing the defeated, just in time to get his gloves into a drawer and feign to be looking out of window in a contemplative state of mind when a servant entered, the Reverend Septimus then gave place to the urn and other preparations for breakfast. These completed, and the two alone again, it was pleasant to see (or would have been, if there had been any one to see it, which there never was), the old lady standing to say the Lord's Prayer aloud, and her son, Minor Canon nevertheless, standing with bent head to hear it, he being within five years of forty: much as he had stood to hear the same words from the same lips when he was within five months of four.

What is prettier than an old lady—except a young lady—when her eyes are bright, when her figure is trim and compact, when her face is cheerful and calm, when her dress is as the dress of a china shepherdess: so dainty in its colours, so individually assorted to herself, so neatly moulded on her? Nothing is prettier, thought the good Minor Canon frequently, when taking his seat at table opposite his long-widowed mother. Her thought at such times may be condensed into the two words that oftenest did duty together in all her conversation: "My Sept!"

They were a good pair to sit breakfasting together in Minor Canon Corner, Cloisterham. For Minor Canon Corner was a quiet place in the shadow of the Cathedral, which the cawing of the rooks, the echoing footsteps of rare passers, the sound of the Cathedral bell, or the roll of the Cathedral organ, seemed to render more quiet than absolute silence. Swaggering fighting men had had their centuries of ramping and raving about Minor Canon Corner, and beaten serfs had had their centuries of drudging and dying there, and powerful monks had had their centuries of being sometimes useful and sometimes harmful there, and behold they were all gone out of Minor Canon Corner, and so much the better. Perhaps one of the highest uses of their ever having been there, was, that there might be left behind, that blessed air of tranquillity which pervaded Minor Canon Corner, and that serenely romantic state of the mind—productive for the most part of pity and forbearance—which is engendered by a sorrowful story that is all told, or a pathetic play that is played out.

Red-brick walls harmoniously toned down in colour by time, strong-rooted ivy, latticed windows, panelled rooms, big oaken beams in little places, and stone-walled gardens where annual fruit yet ripened upon monkish trees, were the principal surroundings of pretty old Mrs. Crisparkle and the Reverend Septimus as they sat at breakfast.

"And what, Ma dear," inquired the Minor Canon, giving proof of a wholesome and vigorous appetite, "does the letter say?"

The pretty old lady, after reading it, had just laid it down upon the breakfast-cloth. She handed it over to her son.

Now, the old lady was exceedingly proud of her bright eyes being so clear that she could read writing without spectacles. Her son was also so proud of the circumstance, and so dutifully bent on her deriving the utmost possible gratification from it, that he had invented the pretence that he himself could *not* read writing without spectacles. Therefore he now assumed a pair, of grave and prodigious proportions, which not only seriously inconvenienced his nose and his breakfast, but seriously impeded his perusal of the letter. For he had the eyes of a microscope and a telescope combined, when they were unassisted.

"It's from Mr. Honeythunder, of course," said the old lady, folding her arms.

"Of course," assented her son. He then lamely read on:

" 'Haven of Philanthropy,
" 'Chief Offices, London, Wednesday.

" 'Dear Madam,

" 'I write in the—;' In the what's this? What does he write in?"

"In the chair," said the old lady.

The Reverend Septimus took off his spectacles, that he might see her face, as he exclaimed:

"Why, what should he write in?"

"Bless me, bless me, Sept," returned the old lady, "you don't see the context! Give it back to me, my dear."

Glad to get his spectacles off (for they always made his eyes water), her son obeyed: murmuring that his sight for reading manuscript got worse and worse daily.

" 'I write', " his mother went on, reading very perspicuously and precisely, " 'from the chair, to which I shall probably be confined for some hours.' "

Septimus looked at the row of chairs against the wall, with a half-protesting and half-appealing countenance.

" 'We have,' " the old lady read on with a little extra emphasis, " 'a meeting of our Convened Chief Composite Committee of Central and District Philanthropists, at our Head Haven as above; and it is their unanimous pleasure that I take the chair.' "

Septimus breathed more freely and muttered: "O! if he comes to *that*, let him."

" 'Not to lose a day's post, I take the opportunity of a long report being read, denouncing a public miscreant—— '

"It is a most extraordinary thing," interposed the gentle Minor Canon, laying down his knife and fork to rub his ear in a vexed manner, "that these Philanthropists are always denouncing somebody. And it is another most extraordinary thing that they are always so violently flush of miscreants!"

" 'Denouncing a public miscreant!' "—the old lady resumed, " 'to get our little affair of business off my mind. I have spoken with my two wards, Neville and Helena Landless, on the subject of their defective education, and they give in to the plan proposed; as I should have taken good care they did, whether they liked it or not.' "

"And it is another most extraordinary thing," remarked the Minor Canon in the same tone as before, "that these philanthropists are so given to seizing their fellow-creatures by the scruff of the neck, and (as one may say) bumping them into the paths of peace.—I beg your pardon, Ma dear, for interrupting."

" 'Therefore, dear Madam, you will please prepare your son, the Rev. Mr. Septimus, to expect Neville as an inmate to be read with, on Monday next. On the same day Helena will accompany him to Cloisterham, to take up her quarters at the Nuns' House, the establishment recommended by yourself and son jointly. Please likewise to prepare for her reception and tuition there. The terms in both cases are understood to be exactly as stated to me in writing by yourself, when I opened a correspondence with you on this subject, after the honour of being introduced to you at your sister's house in town here. With compliments to the Rev. Mr. Septimus, I am, Dear Madam, Your affectionate brother (In Philanthropy), LUKE HONEYTHUNDER.' "

"Well, Ma," said Septimus, after a little more rubbing of his ear, "we must try it. There can be no doubt that we have room for an inmate, and that I have time to bestow upon him, and inclination too. I must confess to feeling rather glad that he is not Mr. Honeythunder himself. Though that seems wretchedy prejudiced—does it not?—for I never saw him. Is he a large man, Ma?"

"I should call him a large man, my dear," the old lady replied after some hesitation, "but that his voice is so much larger."

"Than himself?"

"Than anybody."

"Hah!" said Septimus. And finished his breakfast as if the flavour of the Superior Family Souchong, and also of the ham and toast and eggs, were a little on the wane.

Mrs. Crisparkle's sister, another piece of Dresden china, and matching her so neatly that they would have made a delightful pair of ornaments for the two ends of any capacious old-fashioned chimneypiece, and by right should have never been seen apart, was the childless wife of a clergyman holding Corporation preferment in London City. Mr. Honeythunder in his public character of Professor of Philanthropy had come to know Mrs. Crisparkle during the last re-matching of the china ornaments (in other words during her last annual visit to her sister), after a public occasion of a philanthropic nature, when certain devoted orphans of tender years had been glutted with plum buns, and plump bumptiousness. These were all the antecedents known in Minor Canon Corner of the coming pupils.

"I am sure you will agree with me, Ma," said Mr. Crisparkle, after thinking the matter over, "that the first thing to be done, is to put these young people as much at their ease as possible. There is nothing disinterested in the notion, because we cannot be at our ease with them unless they are at their ease with us. Now, Jasper's nephew is down here at present; and like takes to like, and youth takes to youth. He is a cordial young fellow, and we will have to meet the brother and sister at dinner. That's three. We can't think of asking him, without asking Jasper. That's four. Add Miss Twinkleton and the fairy bride that is to be, and that's six. Add our two selves, and that's eight. Would eight at a friendly dinner at all put you out, Ma?"

"Nine would, Sept," returned the old lady, visibly nervous.

"My dear Ma, I particularise eight."

"The exact size of the table and the room, my dear."

So it was settled that way; and when Mr. Crisparkle called with his mother upon Miss Twinkleton, to arrange for the reception of

Miss Helena Landless at the Nuns' House, the two other invitations having reference to that establishment were proffered and accepted. Miss Twinkleton did, indeed, glance at the globes, as regretting that they were not formed to be taken out into society; but became reconciled to leaving them behind. Instructions were then despatched to the Philanthropist for the departure and arrival, in good time for dinner, of Mr. Neville and Miss Helena ; and stock for soup became fragrant in the air of Minor Canon Corner.

In those days there was no railway to Cloisterham, and Mr. Sapsea said there never would be. Mr. Sapsea said more; he said there never should be. And yet, marvellous to consider, it has come to pass, in these days, that Express Trains don't think Cloisterham worth stopping at, but yell and whirl through it on their larger errands, casting the dust off their wheels as a testimony against its insignificance. Some remote fragment of Main Line to somewhere else, there was, which was going to ruin the Money Market if it failed, and Church and State if it succeeded, and (of course), the Constitution, whether or no; but even that had already so unsettled Cloisterham traffic, that the traffic, deserting the high road, came sneaking in from an unprecedented part of the country by a back stable-way, for many years labelled at the corner: "Beware of the Dog."

To this ignominious avenue of approach, Mr. Crisparkle repaired, awaiting the arrival of a short squat omnibus, with a disproportionate heap of luggage on the roof—like a little Elephant with infinitely too much Castle—which was then the daily service between Cloisterham and external mankind. As this vehicle lumbered up, Mr. Crisparkle could hardly see anything else of it for a large outside passenger seated on the box, with his elbows squared, and his hands on his knees compressing the driver into a most uncomfortably small compass, and glowering about him with a strongly-marked face.

"Is this Cloisterham?" demanded the passenger, in a tremendous voice.

"It is," replied the driver, rubbing himself as if he ached, after throwing the reins to the ostler. "And I never was so glad to see it."

"Tell your master to make his box-seat wider, then," returned the passenger. "Your master is morally bound—and ought to be legally, under ruinous penalties—to provide for the comfort of his fellow-man."

The driver instituted, with the palms of his hands, a superficial perquisition into the state of his skeleton; which seemed to make him anxious.

"Have I sat upon you?" asked the passenger.

"You have," said the driver, as if he didn't like it at all.

"Take that card, my friend."

"I think I won't deprive you on it," returned the driver, casting his eyes over it with no great favour, without taking it. "What's the good of it to me?"

"Be a Member of that Society," said the passenger.

"What shall I get by it?" asked the driver.

"Brotherhood," returned the passenger, in a ferocious voice.

"Thankee," said the driver, very deliberately, as he got down; "my mother was contented with myself, and so am I. I don't want no brothers."

"But you must have them," replied the passenger, also descending, "whether you like it or not. I am your brother."

"I say!" expostulated the driver, becoming more chafed in temper, "not too fur! The worm *will*, when——"

But here Mr. Crisparkle interposed, remonstrating aside, in a friendly voice: "Joe, Joe, Joe! don't forget yourself, Joe, my good fellow!" and then, when Joe peaceably touched his hat, accosting the passenger with: "Mr. Honeythunder?"

"That is my name, sir."

"My name is Crisparkle."

"Reverend Mr. Septimus? Glad to see you, sir. Neville and Helena are inside. Having a little succumbed of late, under the pressure of my public labours, I thought I would take a mouthful of fresh air, and come down with them, and return at night. So you are the Reverend Mr. Septimus, are you?" surveying him on the whole with disappointment, and twisting a double eyeglass by its ribbon, as if he were roasting it, but not otherwise using it. "Hah! I expected to see you older, sir."

"I hope you will," was the good-humoured reply.

"Eh?" demanded Mr. Honeythunder.

"Only a poor little joke. Not worth repeating."

"Joke? Ay; I never see a joke," Mr. Honeythunder frowningly retorted. "A joke is wasted upon me, sir. Where are they? Helena and Neville, come here! Mr. Crisparkle has come down to meet you."

An unusually handsome lithe young fellow, and an unusually handsome lithe girl; much alike; both very dark, and very rich in colour; she of almost the gipsy type; something untamed about them both; a certain air upon them of hunter and huntress; yet withal a certain air of being the objects of the chase, rather than the followers. Slender, supple, quick of eye and limb; half shy, half defiant; fierce of look; an indefinable kind of pause coming and going on their whole expression, both of face and form, which might be equally likened to the pause before a crouch or a bound. The rough mental notes made in the first five minutes by Mr. Crisparkle would have read thus, *verbatim*.

He invited Mr. Honeythunder to dinner, with a troubled mind (for the discomfiture of the dear old china shepherdess lay heavy on it), and gave his arm to Helena Landless. Both she and her brother, as they walked all together through the ancient streets, took great delight in what he pointed out of the Cathedral and the Monastery ruin, and wondered—so his notes ran on—much as if they were beautiful barbaric captives brought from some wild tropical dominion. Mr. Honeythunder walked in the middle of the road, shouldering the natives out of his way, and loudly developing a scheme he had, for making a raid on all the unemployed persons in the United Kingdom, laying them every one by the heels in jail, and forcing them, on pain of prompt extermination, to become philanthropists.

Mrs. Crisparkle had need of her own share of philanthropy when she beheld this very large and very loud excrescence on the little party. Always something in the nature of a Boil upon the face of society, Mr. Honeythunder expanded into an inflammatory Wen in Minor Canon Corner. Though it was not literally true, as was facetiously charged against him by public unbelievers, that he called aloud to his fellow-creatures: "Curse your souls and bodies, come here and be blessed!" still his philanthropy was of that gunpowderous sort that the difference between it and animosity was hard to determine. You were to abolish military force, but you were first to bring all commanding officers who had done their duty to trial by court-martial for that offence, and shoot them. You were to abolish war, but were to make converts by making war upon them, and charging them with loving war as the apple of their eye. You were to have no capital punishment, but were first to sweep off the face of the earth all legislators, jurists, and judges, who were of the contrary opinion. You were to have universal concord, and were to get it by eliminating all the people who wouldn't, or conscientiously couldn't, be concordant. You were to love your brother as yourself, but after an indefinite interval of maligning him (very much as if you hated him), and calling him all manner of names. Above all things, you were to do nothing in private, or on your own account. You were to go to the offices of the Haven of Philanthropy, and put your name down as a Member and a Professing Philanthropist. Then, you were to pay up your subscription, get your card of membership and your riband and medal, and were evermore to live upon a platform, and evermore to say what Mr. Honeythunder said, and what the Treasurer said, and what the sub-Treasurer said, and what the Committee said, and what the sub-Committee said, and what the Secretary said, and what the Vice-Secretary said. And this was usually said in the unanimously-carried resolution under hand and seal, to the effect: "That this assembled Body of Professing Philanthropists views, with indignant scorn and contempt, not unmixed with utter detestation and loathing abhorrence"—in short, the baseness of all those who do not belong to it, and pledges itself to make as many obnoxious statements as possible about them, without being at all particular as to facts.

The dinner was a most doleful breakdown. The philanthropist deranged the symmetry of the table, sat himself in the way of the waiting, blocked up the thoroughfare, and drove Mr. Tope (who assisted the parlour-maid) to the verge of distraction by passing plates and dishes on, over his own head. Nobody could talk to anybody, because he held forth to everybody at once, as if the company had no individual existence, but were a Meeting. He impounded the Reverend Mr. Septimus, as an official personage to be addressed, or kind of human peg to hang his oratorical hat on, and fell into the exasperating habit, common among such orators, of impersonating him as a wicked and weak opponent. Thus, he would ask: "And will you, sir, now stultify yourself by telling me"—and so forth, when the innocent man had not opened his lips, nor meant to open them. Or he would say: "Now see, sir, to what a position you are reduced. I will leave you no escape. After exhausting all the resources of fraud and falsehood, during years upon years: after exhibiting a combination of dastardly meanness with ensanguined daring, such as the world has not often witnessed; you have now the hypocrisy to bend the knee before the most degraded of mankind, and to sue and whine and howl for mercy!" Whereat the unfortunate Minor Canon would look, in part indignant and in part perplexed; while his worthy mother sat bridling, with tears in her eyes, and the remainder of the party lapsed into a sort of gelatinous state, in which there was no flavour or solidity, and very little resistance.

But the gush of philanthropy that burst forth when the departure of Mr. Honeythunder began to impend, must have been highly gratifying to the feelings of that distinguished man. His coffee was produced, by the special activity of Mr. Tope, a full hour before he wanted it. Mr. Crisparkle sat with his watch in his hand for about the same period, lest he should overstay his time. The four young people were unanimous in believing that the Cathedral clock struck three-quarters, when it actually struck but one. Miss Twinkleton estimated the distance to the omnibus at five-and-twenty minutes' walk, when it was really five. The affectionate kindness of the whole circle hustled him into his greatcoat, and shoved him out into the moonlight, as if he were a fugitive traitor with whom they sympathised, and a troop of horse were at the back door. Mr. Crisparkle and his new charge, who took him to the omnibus, were so fervent in their apprehensions of his catching cold, that they shut him up in it instantly and left him, with still half-an-hour to spare.

CHAPTER VII

MORE CONFIDENCES THAN ONE

"I KNOW very little of that gentleman, sir," said Neville to the Minor Canon as they turned back.

"You know very little of your guardian?" the Minor Canon repeated.

"Almost nothing!"

"How came he——"

"To *be* my guardian? I'll tell you, sir. I suppose you know that we come (my sister and I) from Ceylon?"

"Indeed, no."

"I wonder at that. We lived with a stepfather there. Our mother died there, when we were little children. We have had a wretched existence. She made him our guardian, and he was a miserly wretch who grudged us food to eat, and clothes to wear. At his death, he passed us over to this man; for no better reason that I know of, than his being a friend or connexion of his, whose name was always in print and catching his attention."

"That was lately, I suppose?"

"Quite lately, sir. This stepfather of ours was a cruel brute as well as a grinding one. It is well he died when he did, or I might have killed him."

Mr. Crisparkle stopped short in the moonlight and looked at his hopeful pupil in consternation.

"I surprise you, sir?" he said, with a quick change to a submissive manner.

"You shock me; unspeakably shock me."

The pupil hung his head for a little while, as they walked on, and then said: "You never saw him beat your sister. I have seen him beat mine, more than once or twice, and I never forgot it."

"Nothing," said Mr. Crisparkle, "not even a beloved and beautiful sister's tears under dastardly ill-usage;" he became less severe, in spite of himself, as his indignation rose; "could justify those horrible expressions that you used."

"I am sorry I used them, and especially to you, sir. I beg to recall them. But permit me to set you right on one point. You spoke of my sister's tears. My sister would have let him tear her to pieces, before she would have let him believe that he could make her shed a tear."

Mr. Crisparkle reviewed those mental notes of his, and was neither at all surprised to hear it, nor at all disposed to question it.

"Perhaps you will think it strange, sir,"—this was said in a hesitating voice—"that I should so soon ask you to allow me to confide in you, and to have the kindness to hear a word or two from me in my defence?"

"Defence?" Mr. Crisparkle repeated. "You are not on your defence, Mr. Neville."

"I think I am, sir. At least I know I should be, if you were better acquainted with my character."

"Well, Mr. Neville," was the rejoinder. "What if you leave me to find it out?"

"Since it is your pleasure, sir," answered the young man, with a quick change in his manner to sullen disappointment: "since it is your pleasure to check me in my impulse, I must submit."

There was that in the tone of this short speech which made the conscientious man to whom it was addressed uneasy. It hinted to him that he might, without meaning it, turn aside a trustfulness beneficial to a mis-shapen young mind and perhaps to his own power of directing and improving it. They were within sight of the lights in his windows, and he stopped.

"Let us turn back and take a turn or two up and down, Mr. Neville, or you may not have time to finish what you wish to say to me. You are hasty in thinking that I mean to check you. Quite the contrary. I invite your confidence."

"You have invited it, sir, without knowing it, ever since I came here. I say 'ever since,' as if I had been here a week. The truth is, we came here (my sister and I) to quarrel with you, and affront you, and break away again."

"Really?" said Mr. Crisparkle, at a dead loss for anything else to say.

"You see, we could not know what you were beforehand, sir; could we?"

"Clearly not," said Mr. Crisparkle.

"And having liked no one else with whom we have ever been brought into contact, we had made up our minds not to like you."

"Really?" said Mr. Crisparkle again.

"But we do like you, sir, and we see an unmistakable difference between your house and your reception of us, and anything else we have ever known. This—and my happening to be alone with you—and everything around us seeming so quiet and peaceful after Mr. Honeythunder's departure—and Cloisterham being so old and grave and beautiful, with the moon shining on it—these things inclined me to open my heart."

"I quite understand, Mr. Neville. And it is salutary to listen to such influences."

"In describing my own imperfections, sir, I must ask you not to suppose that I am describing my sister's. She has come out of the disadvantages of our miserable life, as much better than I am, as that Cathedral tower is higher than those chimneys."

Mr. Crisparkle in his own breast was not so sure of this.

"I have had, sir, from my earliest remembrance, to suppress a deadly and bitter hatred. This had made me secret and revengeful. I have been always tyrannically held down by the strong hand. This has driven me, in my weakness, to the resource of being false and mean. I have been stinted of education, liberty, money, dress, the very necessaries of life, the commonest pleasures of childhood, the commonest possessions of youth. This has caused me to be utterly wanting in I don't know what emotions, or remembrances, or good instincts—I have not even a name for the thing, you see!—that you have had to work upon in other young men to whom you have been accustomed."

"This is evidently true. But this is not encouraging," thought Mr. Crisparkle as they turned again.

"And to finish with, sir: I have been brought up among abject and servile dependents, of an inferior race, and I may easily have contracted some affinity with them. Sometimes, I don't know but that it may be a drop of what is tigerish in their blood."

"As in the case of that remark just now," thought Mr. Crisparkle.

"In a last word of reference to my sister, sir (we are twin children), you ought to know, to her honour, that nothing in our misery ever subdued her, though it often cowed me. When we ran away from it (we ran away four times in six years, to be soon brought back and cruelly punished), the flight was always of her planning and leading. Each time she dressed as a boy, and showed the daring of a man. I take it we were seven years old when we first decamped; but I remember, when I lost the pocket-knife with which she was to have cut her hair short, how desperately she tried to tear it out, or bite it off. I have nothing further to say, sir, except that I hope you will bear with me and make allowance for me."

"Of that, Mr. Neville, you may be sure," returned the Minor Canon. "I don't preach more than I can help, and I will not repay your confidence with a sermon. But I entreat you to bear in mind, very seriously and steadily, that if I am to do you any good, it can only be with your own assistance; and that you can only render that, efficiently, by seeking aid from Heaven."

"I will try to do my part, sir."

"And, Mr. Neville, I will try to do mine. Here is my hand on it. May God bless our endeavours!"

They were now standing at his house-door, and a cheerful sound of voices and laughter was heard within.

"We will take one more turn before going in," said Mr. Crisparkle, "for I want to ask you a question. When you said you were in a changed mind concerning me, you spoke, not only for yourself, but for your sister too?"

"Undoubtedly I did, sir."

"Excuse me, Mr. Neville, but I think you have had no opportunity of communicating with your sister, since I met you. Mr. Honeythunder was very eloquent; but perhaps I may venture to say, without ill-nature, that he rather monopolised the occasion. May you not have answered for your sister without sufficient warrant?"

Neville shook his head with a proud smile.

"You don't know, sir, yet, what a complete understanding can exist between my sister and me, though no spoken word—perhaps hardly as much as a look—may have passed between us. She not only feels as I have described, but she very well knows that I am taking this opportunity of speaking to you, both for her and for myself."

Mr. Crisparkle looked in his face, with some incredulity; but his face expressed such absolute and firm conviction of the truth of what he said, that Mr. Crisparkle looked at the pavement, and mused, until they came to his door again.

"I will ask for one more turn, sir, this time," said the young man, with a rather heightened colour rising in his face. "But for Mr. Honeythunder's—I think you called it eloquence, sir?" (somewhat slyly.)

"I—yes, I called it eloquence," said Mr. Crisparkle.

"But for Mr. Honeythunder's eloquence, I might have had no need to ask you what I am going to ask you. This Mr. Edwin Drood, sir: I think that's the name?"

"Quite correct," said Mr. Crisparkle. "D-r-double o-d."

"Does he—or did he—read with you, sir?"

"Never, Mr. Neville. He comes here visiting his relation, Mr. Jasper."

"Is Mr. Bud his relation too, sir?"

("Now, why should he ask that, with sudden superciliousness?" thought Mr. Crisparkle.) Then he explained, aloud, what he knew of the little story of their betrothal.

"Oh! *that's* it, is it?" said the young man. "I understand his air of proprietorship now!"

This was said so evidently to himself, or to anybody rather than Mr. Crisparkle, that the latter instinctively felt as if to notice it would be almost tantamount to noticing a passage in a letter which he had read by chance over the writer's shoulder. A moment afterwards they re-entered the house.

Mr. Jasper was seated at the piano as they came into his drawing-room, and was accompanying Miss Rosebud while she sang. It was a consequence of his playing the accompaniment without notes, and of her being a heedless little creature, very apt to go wrong, that he followed her lips most attentively, with his eyes as well as hands; carefully and softly hinting the key-note from time to time. Standing with an arm drawn round her, but with a face far more intent on Mr. Jasper than on her singing, stood Helena, between whom and her brother an instantaneous recognition passed, in which Mr. Crisparkle saw, or thought he saw, the understanding that had been spoken of, flash out. Mr. Neville then took his admiring station, leaning against the piano, opposite the singer; Mr. Crisparkle sat down by the china shepherdess; Edwin Drood gallantly furled and unfurled Miss Twinkleton's fan; and that lady passively claimed that sort of exhibitor's proprietorship in the accomplishment on view, which Mr. Tope, the Verger, daily claimed in the Cathedral service.

The song went on. It was a sorrowful strain of parting, and the fresh young voice was very plaintive and tender. As Jasper watched the pretty lips, and ever and again hinted the one note, as though it were a low whisper from himself, the voice became less steady, until all at once the singer broke into a burst of tears, and shrieked out, with her hands over her eyes: "I can't bear this! I am frightened! Take me away!"

With one swift turn of her lithe figure, Helena laid the little beauty on a sofa, as if she had never caught her up. Then, on one knee beside her, and with one hand upon her rosy mouth, while with the other she appealed to all the rest, Helena said to them: "It's nothing; it's all over; don't speak to her for one minute, and she is well!"

Jasper's hands had, in the same instant, lifted themselves from the keys, and were now poised above them, as though he waited to resume. In that attitude he yet sat quiet: not even looking around, when all the rest had changed their places and were reassuring one another.

"Pussy's not used to an audience; that's the fact," said Edwin Drood. "She got nervous, and couldn't hold out. Besides, Jack, you are such a conscientious master, and require so much, that I believe you make her afraid of you. No wonder."

"No wonder," repeated Helena.

"There, Jack, you hear! You would be afraid of him, under similar circumstances, wouldn't you, Miss Landless?"

"Not under any circumstances," returned Helena.

Jasper brought down his hands, looked over his shoulder, and begged to thank Miss Landless for her vindication of his character. Then he fell to dumbly playing, without striking the notes, while his little pupil was taken to an open window for air, and was otherwise petted and restored. When she was brought back, his place was empty. "Jack's gone, Pussy," Edwin told her. "I am more than half afraid he didn't like to be charged with being the Monster who had frightened you." But she answered never a word, and shivered, as if they had made her a little too cold.

Miss Twinkleton now opining that indeed these were late hours, Mrs. Crisparkle, for finding ourselves outside the walls of the Nuns' House, and that we who undertook the formation of the future wives and mothers of England (the last words in a lower voice, as requiring to be communicated in confidence) were really bound (voice coming up again) to set a better example than one of rakish habits, wrappers were put in requisition, and the two young cavaliers volunteered to see the ladies home. It was soon done, and the gate of the Nuns' House closed upon them.

The boarders had retired, and only Mrs. Tisher in solitary vigil awaited the new pupil. Her bedroom being within Rosa's, very little introduction or explanation was necessary, before she was placed in charge of her new friend, and left for the night.

"This is a blessed relief, my dear," said Helena. "I have been dreading all day, that I should be brought to bay at this time."

"There are not many of us," returned Rosa, "and we are good-

At the Piano.

natured girls; at least the others are; I can answer for them."

"I can answer for you," laughed Helena, searching the lovely little face with her dark fiery eyes, and tenderly caressing the small figure. "You will be a friend to me, won't you?"

"I hope so. But the idea of my being a friend to you seems too absurd, though."

"Why?"

"O, I am such a mite of a thing, and you are so womanly and handsome. You seem to have resolution and power enough to crush me. I shrink into nothing by the side of your presence even."

"I am a neglected creature, my dear, unacquainted with all accomplishments, sensitively conscious that I have everything to learn, and deeply ashamed to own my ignorance."

"And yet you acknowledge everything to me!" said Rosa.

"My pretty one, can I help it? There is a fascination in you."

"O! is there though?" pouted Rosa, half in jest and half in earnest. "What a pity Master Eddy doesn't feel it more!"

Of course her relations towards that young gentleman had been already imparted in Minor Canon Corner.

"Why, surely he must love you with all his heart!" cried Helena, with an earnestness that threatened to blaze into ferocity if he didn't.

"Eh? O, well, I suppose he does," said Rosa, pouting again; "I am sure I have no right to say he doesn't. Perhaps it's my fault. Perhaps I am not as nice to him as I ought to be. I don't think I am. But it *is* so ridiculous!"

Helena's eyes demanded what was.

"*We* are," said Rosa, answering as if she had spoken. "We are such a ridiculous couple. And we are always quarrelling."

"Why?"

"Because we both know we are ridiculous, my dear!" Rosa gave that answer as if it were the most conclusive answer in the world.

Helena's masterful look was intent upon her face for a few moments and then she impulsively put out both her hands and said:

"You will be my friend and help me?"

"Indeed, my dear, I will," replied Rosa, in a tone of affectionate childishness that went straight and true to her heart; "I will be as good a friend as such a mite of a thing can be to such a noble creature as you. And be a friend to me, please; I don't understand myself: and I want a friend who can understand me, very much indeed."

Helena Landless kissed her, and retaining both her hands said:

"Who is Mr. Jasper?"

Rosa turned aside her head in answering: "Eddy's uncle, and my music-master."

"You do not love him?"

"Ugh!" She put her hands up to her face, and shook with fear or horror.

"You know that he loves you?"

"O, don't, don't, don't!" cried Rosa, dropping on her knees, and clinging to her new resource. "Don't tell me of it! He terrifies me. He haunts my thoughts, like a dreadful ghost. I feel that I am never safe from him. I feel as if he could pass in through the wall when he is spoken of." She actually did look round, as if she dreaded to see him standing in the shadow behind her.

"Try to tell me more about it, darling."

"Yes, I will, I will. Because you are so strong. But hold me the while, and stay with me afterwards."

"My child! You speak as if he had threatened you in some dark way."

"He has never spoken to me about—that. Never."

"What has he done?"

"He has made a slave of me with his looks. He has forced me to understand him, without his saying a word; and he has forced me to keep silence, without his uttering a threat. When I play, he never moves his eyes from my hands. When I sing, he never moves his eyes from my lips. When he corrects me, and strikes a note, or a chord, or plays a passage, he himself is in the sounds, whispering that he pursues me as a lover, and commanding me to keep his secret. I avoid his eyes, but he forces me to see them without looking at them. Even when a glaze comes over them (which is sometimes the case), and he seems to wander away into a frightful sort of dream in which he threatens most, he obliges me to know it, and to know that he is sitting close at my side, more terrible to me than ever."

"What is this imagined threatening, pretty one? What is threatened?"

"I don't know. I have never even dared to think or wonder what it is."

"And was this all, to-night?"

"This was all; except that to-night when he watched my lips so closely as I was singing, besides feeling terrified I felt ashamed and passionately hurt. It was as if he kissed me, and I couldn't bear it, but cried out. You must never breathe this to any one. Eddy is devoted to him. But you said to-night that you would not be afraid of him, under any circumstances, and that gives me—who am so much afraid of him—courage to tell only you. Hold me! Stay with me! I am too frightened to be left by myself."

The lustrous gipsy-face drooped over the clinging arms and bosom, and the wild black hair fell down protectingly over the childish form. There was a slumbering gleam of fire in the intense dark eyes, though they were then softened with compassion and admiration. Let whomsoever it most concerned look well to it!

CHAPTER VIII

DAGGERS DRAWN

THE two young men, having seen the damsels, their charges, enter the courtyard of the Nuns' House, and finding themselves coldly stared at by the brazen door-plate, as if the battered old beau with the glass in his eye were insolent, look at one another, look along the perspective of the moonlit street, and slowly walk away together.

"Do you stay here long, Mr. Drood?" says Neville.

"Not this time," is the careless answer. "I leave for London again, to-morrow. But I shall be here, off and on, until next Midsummer; then I shall take my leave of Cloisterham, and England too; for many a long day, I expect."

"Are you going abroad?"

"Going to wake up Egypt a little," is the condescending answer.

"Are you reading?"

"Reading?" repeats Edwin Drood, with a touch of contempt. "No. Doing, working, engineering. My small patrimony was left a part of the capital of the Firm I am with, by my father, a former partner; and I am a charge upon the Firm until I come of age; and then I step into my modest share in the concern. Jack—you met him at dinner—is, until then, my guardian and trustee."

"I heard from Mr. Crisparkle of your other good fortune."

"What do you mean by my other good fortune?"

Neville has made his remark in a watchfully advancing, and yet furtive and shy manner, very expressive of that peculiar air already noticed, of being at once hunter and hunted. Edwin has made his retort with an abruptness not at all polite. They stop and interchange a rather heated look.

"I hope," says Neville, "there is no offence, Mr. Drood, in my innocently referring to your betrothal?"

"By George!" cried Edwin, leading on again at a somewhat quicker pace; "everybody in this chattering old Cloisterham refers to it. I wonder no public-house has been set up, with my portrait for the sign of the Bethrothed's Head. Or Pussy's portrait. One or the other."

"I am not accountable for Mr. Crisparkle's mentioning the matter to me, quite openly," Neville begins.

"No; that's true; you are not," Edwin Drood assents.

"But," resumes Neville, "I am accountable for mentioning it to you. And I did so, on the supposition that you could not fail to be highly proud of it."

Now, there are these two curious touches of human nature working the secret springs of this dialogue. Neville Landless is already enough impressed by Little Rosebud, to feel indignant that Edwin Drood (far below her) should hold his prize so lightly. Edwin Drood is already enough impressed by Helena, to feel indignant that Helena's brother (far below her) should dispose of him so coolly, and put him out of the way so entirely.

However, the last remark had better be answered. So, says Edwin: "I don't know, Mr. Neville" (adopting that mode of address from Mr. Crisparkle), "that what people are proudest of, they usually talk most about; I don't know either, that what they are proudest of, they most like other people to talk about. But I live a busy life, and I speak under correction by you readers, who ought to know everything and I daresay do."

By this time they had both become savage; Mr. Neville out in the open; Edwin Drood under the transparent cover of a popular tune, and a stop now and then to pretend to admire picturesque effects in the moonlight before him.

"It does not seem to me very civil in you," remarks Neville, at length, "to reflect upon a stranger who comes here, not having had your advantages, to try to make up for lost time. But, to be sure, *I* was not brought up in 'busy life,' and my ideas of civility were formed among Heathens."

"Perhaps the best civility, whatever kind of people we are brought up among," retorts Edwin Drood, "is to mind our own business. If you will set me that example, I promise to follow it."

"Do you know that you take a great deal too much upon yourself?" is the angry rejoinder, "and that in the part of the world I come from, you would be called to account for it?"

"By whom, for instance?" asks Edwin Drood, coming to a halt, and surveying the other with a look of disdain.

But here a startling right hand is laid on Edwin's shoulder, and Jasper stands between them. For it would seem that he, too, has strolled round by the Nuns' House, and has come up behind them on the shadowy side of the road.

"Ned, Ned, Ned!" he says; "we must have no more of this. I don't like this. I have overheard high words between you two. Remember, my dear boy, you are almost in the position of host to-night. You belong, as it were, to the place, and in a manner represent it towards a stranger. Mr. Neville is a stranger, and you should respect the obligations of hospitality. And, Mr. Neville," laying his left hand on the inner shoulder of that young gentleman, and thus walking on between them, hand to shoulder on either side: "you will pardon me; but I appeal to you to govern your temper too. Now, what is amiss? But why ask! Let there be nothing amiss, and the question is superfluous. We are all three on a good understanding, are we not?" . . .

After a silent struggle between the two young men who shall speak last, Edwin Drood strikes in with: "So far as I am concerned, Jack, there is no anger in me."

"Nor in me," says Neville Landless, though not so freely, or perhaps so carelessly. "But if Mr. Drood knew all that lies behind me, far away from here, he might know better how it is that sharp-edged words have sharp edges to wound me."

"Perhaps," says Jasper, in a soothing manner, "we had better not qualify our good understanding. We had better not say anything having the appearance of a remonstrance or condition; it might not seem generous. Frankly and freely, you see there is no anger in Ned. Frankly and freely, there is no anger in you, Mr. Neville?"

"None at all, Mr. Jasper." Still, not quite so frankly or so freely; or, be it said once again, not quite so carelessly perhaps.

"All over then! Now, my bachelor gatehouse is a few yards from here, and the heater is on the fire, and the wine and glasses are on the table, and it is not a stone's throw from Minor Canon Corner. Ned, you are up and away to-morrow. We will carry Mr. Neville in with us, to take a stirrup-cup."

"With all my heart, Jack."

"And with all mine, Mr. Jasper." Neville feels it impossible to say less, but would rather not go. He has an impression upon him that he has lost hold of his temper; feels that Edwin Drood's coolness, so far from being infectious, makes him red-hot.

Mr. Jasper, still walking in the centre, hand to shoulder on either side, beautifully turns the Refrain of a drinking song, and they all go up to his rooms. There, the first object visible, when he adds the light of a lamp to that of the fire, is the portrait over the chimneypiece. It is not an object calculated to improve the understanding between the two young men, as rather awkwardly reviving the subject of their difference. Accordingly, they both glance at it consciously, but say nothing. Jasper, however (who would appear from his conduct to have gained but an imperfect clue to the cause of their late high words), directly calls attention to it.

"You recognise that picture, Mr. Neville?" shading the lamp to throw the light upon it.

"I recognise it, but it is far from flattering the original."

"O, you are hard upon it! It was done by Ned, who made me a present of it."

"I am sorry for that, Mr. Drood." Neville apologises, with a real intention to apologise; "if I had known I was in the artist's presence——"

"O, a joke, sir, a mere joke," Edwin cuts in, with a provoking yawn. "A little humouring of Pussy's points! I'm going to paint her gravely, one of these days, if she's good."

The air of leisurely patronage and indifference with which this is said, as the speaker throws himself back in a chair and clasps his hands at the back of his head, as a rest for it, is very exasperating to the excitable and excited Neville. Jaspar looks observantly from the one to the other, slightly smiles, and turns his back to mix a jug of mulled wine at the fire. It seems to require much mixing and compounding.

"I suppose, Mr. Neville," says Edwin, quick to resent the indignant protest against himself in the face of young Landless, which is fully as visible as the portrait, or the fire, or the lamp: "I suppose that if you painted the picture of your lady love——"

"I can't paint," is the hasty interruption.

"That's your misfortune, and not your fault. You would if you could. But if you could, I suppose you would make her (no matter what she was in reality), Juno, Minerva, Diana, and Venus, all in one. Eh?"

"I have no lady love, and I can't say."

"If I were to try my hand," says Edwin, with a boyish boastfulness getting up in him, "on a portrait of Miss Landless—in earnest, mind you; in earnest—you should see what I could do!"

"My sister's consent to sit for it being first got, I suppose? As it never will be got, I am afraid I shall never see what you can do. I must bear the loss."

Jasper turns round from the fire, fills a large goblet glass for Neville, fills a large goblet glass for Edwin, and hands each his own; then fills for himself, saying:

"Come, Mr. Neville, we are to drink to my nephew, Ned. As it is his foot that is in the stirrup—metaphorically—our stirrup-cup is to be devoted to him. Ned, my dearest fellow, my love!"

Jasper sets the example of nearly emptying his glass, and Neville follows it. Edwin Drood says, "Thank you both very much," and follows the double example.

"Look at him," cries Jasper, stretching out his hand admiringly and tenderly, though rallyingly too. "See where he lounges so easily, Mr. Neville! The world is all before him where to choose. A life of stirring work and interest, a life of change and excitement, a life of domestic ease and love! Look at him!"

Edwin Drood's face has become quickly and remarkably flushed with the wine; so has the face of Neville Landless. Edwin still sits thrown back in his chair, making that rest of clasped hands for his head.

"See how little he heeds it all!" Jasper proceeds in a bantering vein. "It is hardly worth his while to pluck the golden fruit that hangs ripe on the tree for him. And yet consider the contrast, Mr. Neville. You and I have no prospect of stirring work and interest, or of change and excitement, or of domestic ease and love. You and I have no prospect (unless you are more fortunate than I am, which may easily be), but the tedious unchanging round of this dull place."

"Upon my soul, Jack," says Edwin, complacently, "I feel quite apologetic for having my way smoothed as you describe. But you know what I know, Jack, and it may not be so very easy as it seems, after all. May it, Pussy?" To the portrait, with a snap of his thumb and finger. "We have got to hit it off yet; haven't we, Pussy? You know what I mean, Jack."

His speech has become thick and indistinct. Jasper, quiet and self-possessed, looks to Neville, as expecting his answer or comment. When Neville speaks, *his* speech is also thick and indistinct.

"It might have been better for Mr. Drood to have known some hardships," he says, defiantly.

"Pray," retorts Edwin, turning merely his eyes in that direction, "pray why might it have been better for Mr. Drood to have known some hardships?"

"Ay," Jasper assents, with an air of interest; "let us know why?"

"Because they might have made him more sensible," says Neville, "of good fortune that is not by any means necessarily the result of his own merits."

Mr. Jasper quickly looks to his nephew for his rejoinder.

"Have *you* known hardships, may I ask?" says Edwin Drood, sitting upright.

Mr. Jasper quickly looks to the other for his retort.

"I have."

"And what have they made *you* sensible of?"

Mr. Jasper's play of eyes between the two holds good throughout the dialogue, to the end.

"I have told you once before to-night."

"You have done nothing of the sort."

"I tell you I have. That you take a great deal too much upon yourself."

"You added something else to that, if I remember?"

"Yes, I did say something else."

"Say it again."

"I said that in the part of the world I come from, you would be called to account for it."

"Only there?" cries Edwin Drood, with a contemptuous laugh. "A long way off, I believe? Yes; I see! That part of the world is at a safe distance."

"Say here, then," rejoins the other, rising in a fury. "Say anywhere! Your vanity is intolerable, your conceit is beyond endurance; you talk as if you were some rare and precious prize, instead of a common boaster. You are a common fellow, and a common boaster."

"Pooh, pooh," says Edwin Drood, equally furious, but more collected; "how should you know? You may know a black common fellow, or a black common boaster, when you see him (and no doubt you have a large acquaintance that way); but you are no judge of white men."

This insulting allusion to his dark skin infuriates Neville to that violent degree, that he flings the dregs of his wine at Edwin Drood, and is in the act of flinging the goblet after it, when his arm is caught in the nick of time by Jasper.

"Ned, my dear fellow!" he cries in a loud voice; "I entreat you, I command you, to be still!" There has been a rush of all the three and a clattering of glasses and overturning of chairs. "Mr. Neville, for shame! Give this glass to me. Open your hand, sir. I WILL have it!"

But Neville throws him off, and pauses for an instant, in a raging passion, with the goblet yet in his uplifted hand. Then, he dashes it down under the grate, with such force that the broken splinters fly out again in a shower; and he leaves the house.

When he first emerges into the night air, nothing around him is still or steady; nothing around him shows like what it is; he only knows that he stands with a bare head in the midst of a blood-red whirl, waiting to be struggled with, and to struggle to the death.

But nothing happening, and the moon looking down upon him as if he were dead after a fit of wrath he holds his steam-hammer beating head and heart, and staggers away. Then, he becomes half-conscious of having heard himself bolted and barred out, like a dangerous animal; and thinks what shall he do?

Some wildly passionate ideas of the river dissolve under the spell of the moonlight on the Cathedral and the graves, and the remembrance of his sister, and the thought of what he owes to the good man who has but that very day won his confidence and given him his pledge. He repairs to Minor Canon Corner, and knocks softly at the door.

It is Mr. Crisparkle's custom to sit up last of the early household, very softly touching his piano and practising his favourite parts in concerted vocal music. The south wind that goes where it lists, by way of Minor Canon Corner on a still night, is not more subdued than Mr. Crisparkle at such times, regardful of the slumbers of the china shepherdess.

His knock is immediately answered by Mr. Crisparkle himself. When he opens the door, candle in hand, his cheerful face falls, and disappointed amazement is in it.

"Mr. Neville! In this disorder! Where have you been?"

"I have been to Mr. Jasper's, sir. With his nephew."

"Come in."

The Minor Canon props him by the elbow with a strong hand (in a strictly scientific manner, worthy of his morning trainings), and turns him into his own little book-room, and shuts the door.

"I have begun ill, sir. I have begun dreadfully ill."

"Too true. You are not sober, Mr. Neville."

"I am afraid I am not, sir, though I can satisfy you at another time that I have had a very little indeed to drink, and that it overcame me in the strangest and most sudden manner."

"Mr. Neville, Mr. Neville," says the Minor Canon, shaking his head with a sorrowful smile; "I have heard that said before."

"I think—my mind is much confused, but I think—it is equally true of Mr. Jasper's nephew, sir."

"Very likely," is the dry rejoinder.

"We quarrelled, sir. He insulted me most grossly. He had heated that tigerish blood I told you of to-day, before then."

"Mr. Neville," rejoins the Minor Canon, mildly, but firmly: "I request you not to speak to me with that clenched right hand. Unclench it, if you please."

"He goaded me, sir," pursues the young man, instantly obeying, "beyond my power of endurance. I cannot say whether or no he meant it at first, but he did it. He certainly meant it at last. In short, sir," with an irrepressible outburst, "in the passion into which he lashed me, I would have cut him down if I could, and I tried to do it."

"You have clenched that hand again," is Mr. Crisparkle's quiet commentary.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

"You know your room, for I showed it you before dinner; but I will accompany you to it once more. Your arm, if you please. Softly, for the house is all a-bed."

Scooping his hand into the same scientific elbow-rest as before, and backing it up with the inert strength of his arm, as skilfully as a Police Expert, and with an apparent repose quite unattainable by novices, Mr. Crisparkle conducts his pupil to the pleasant and orderly old room prepared for him. Arrived there, the young man throws himself into a chair, and, flinging his arms upon his reading-table, rests his head upon them with an air of wretched self-reproach.

The gentle Minor Canon has had it in his thoughts to leave the room, without a word. But looking round at the door, and seeing this dejected figure, he turns back to it, touches it with a mild hand, and says "Good night!" A sob is his only acknowledgment. He might have had many a worse; perhaps, could have had few better.

Another soft knock at the outer door attracts his attention as he goes down-stairs. He opens it to Mr. Jasper, holding in his hand the pupil's hat.

"We have had an awful scene with him," says Jasper, in a low voice.

"Has it been so bad as that?"

"Murderous!"

Mr. Crisparkle remonstrates: "No, no, no. Do not use such strong words."

"He might have laid my dear boy dead at my feet. It is no fault of his, that he did not. But that I was, through the mercy of God, swift and strong with him, he would have cut him down on my hearth."

The phrase smites home. "Ah!" thinks Mr. Crisparkle, "his own words!"

"Seeing what I have seen to-night, and hearing what I have heard," adds Jasper, with great earnestness, "I shall never know peace of mind when there is danger of those two coming together, with no one else to interfere. It was horrible. There is something of the tiger in his dark blood."

"Ah!" thinks Mr. Crisparkle, "so he said!"

"You, my dear sir," pursues Jasper, taking his hand, "even you, have accepted a dangerous charge."

"You need have no fear for me, Jasper," returns Mr. Crisparkle, with a quiet smile. "I have none for myself."

"I have none for myself," returns Jasper, with an emphasis on the last pronoun, "because I am not, nor am I in the way of being the object of his hostility. But you may be, and my dear boy has been. Good night!"

Mr. Crisparkle goes in, with the hat that has so easily, so almost imperceptibly, acquired the right to be hung up in his hall; hangs it up; and goes thoughtfully to bed.

CHAPTER IX

BIRDS IN THE BUSH

Rosa, having no relation that she knew of in the world, had, from the seventh year of her age, known no home but the Nuns' house, and no mother but Miss Twinkleton. Her remembrance of her own mother was of a pretty little creature like herself (not much older than herself, it seemed to her), who had been brought home in her father's arms, drowned. The fatal accident had happened at a party of pleasure. Every fold and colour in the pretty summer dress, and even the long wet hair, with scattered petals of ruined flowers still clinging to it, as the dead young figure, in its sad, sad beauty lay upon the bed, were fixed indelibly in Rosa's recollection. So were the wild despair and the subsequent bowed-down grief of her poor young father, who died broken-hearted on the first anniversary of that hard day.

The betrothal of Rosa grew out of the soothing of his year of mental distress by his fast friend and old college companion, Drood: who likewise had been left a widower in his youth. But he, too, went the silent road into which all earthly pilgrimages merge, some sooner, and some later; and thus the young couple had come to be as they were.

The atmosphere of pity surrounding the little orphan girl when she first came to Cloisterham, had never cleared away. It had taken brighter hues as she grew older, happier, prettier; now it had been golden, now roseate, and now azure; but it had always adorned her with some soft light of its own. The general desire to console and caress her, had caused her to be treated in the beginning as a child much younger than her years; the same desire had caused her to be still petted when she was a child no longer. Who should be her favourite, who should anticipate this or that small present, or do her this or that small service; who should take her home for the holidays; who should write to her the oftenest when they were separated, and whom she would most rejoice to see again when they were reunited; even these gentle rivalries were not without their slight dashes of bitterness in the Nuns' House. Well for the poor Nuns in their day, if they hid no harder strife under their veils and rosaries!

Thus Rosa had grown to be an amiable, giddy, wilful, winning little creature; spoilt, in the sense of counting upon kindness from all around her; but not in the sense of repaying it with indifference. Possessing an exhaustless well of affection in her nature, its sparkling waters had freshened and brightened the Nuns' House for years, and yet its depths had never yet been moved: what might betide when that came to pass; what developing changes might fall upon the heedless head, and light heart, then; remained to be seen.

By what means the news that there had been a quarrel between the two young men overnight, involving even some kind of onslaught by Mr. Neville upon Edwin Drood, got into Miss Twinkleton's establishment before breakfast, it is impossible to say. Whether it was brought in by the birds of the air, or came blowing in with the very air itself, when the casement windows were set open; whether the baker brought it kneaded into the bread, or the milkman delivered it as part of the adulteration of his milk; or the housemaids beating the dust out of their mats against the gateposts, received it in exchange deposited on the mats by the town atmosphere; certain it is that the news permeated every gable of the old building before Miss Twinkleton was down, and that Miss Twinkleton herself received it through Mrs. Tisher, while yet in the act of dressing; or (as she might have expressed the phrase to a parent or guardian of a mythological turn) of sacrificing to the Graces.

Miss Landless's brother had thrown a bottle at Mr. Edwin Drood.

Miss Landless's brother had thrown a knife at Mr. Edwin Drood.

A knife became suggestive of a fork; and Miss Landless's brother had thrown a fork at Mr. Edwin Drood.

As in the governing precedence of Peter Piper, alleged to have picked the peck of pickled pepper, it was held physically desirable to have evidence of the existence of the peck of pickled pepper which Peter Piper was alleged to have picked; so, in this case, it was held psychologically important to know why Miss Landless's brother threw a bottle, knife, or fork—or bottle, knife, *and* fork—for the cook had been given to understand it was all three—at Mr. Edwin Drood?

Well, then. Miss Landless's brother had said he admired Miss Bud. Mr. Edwin Drood had said to Miss Landless's brother that he had no business to admire Miss Bud. Miss Landless's brother had then "up'd" (this was the cook's exact information) with the bottle, knife, fork, and decanter (the decanter now coolly flying at everybody's head, without the least introduction), and thrown them all at Mr. Edwin Drood.

Poor little Rosa put a forefinger into each of her ears when these rumours began to circulate, and retired into a corner, beseeching not to be told any more; but Miss Landless, begging permission of Miss Twinkleton to go and speak with her brother, and pretty plainly showing that she would take it if it were not given, struck out the more definite course of going to Mr. Crisparkle's for accurate intelligence.

When she came back (being first closeted with Miss Twinkleton in order that anything objectionable in her tidings might be retained by that discreet filter), she imparted to Rosa only, what had taken place; dwelling with a flushed cheek on the provocation her brother had received, but almost limiting it to that last gross affront as crowning "some other words between them," and, out of consideration for her new friend, passing lightly over the fact that the other words had originated in her lover's taking things in general so very easily. To Rosa direct, she brought a petition from her brother that she would forgive him; and, having delivered it with sisterly earnestness, made an end of the subject.

It was reserved for Miss Twinkleton to tone down the public mind of the Nuns' House. That lady, therefore, entering in a stately manner what plebeians might have called the school-room, but what, in the patrician language of the head of the Nuns' House, was euphuistically, not to say round-aboutedly, denominated "the apartment allotted to study," and saying with a forensic air, "Ladies!" all rose. Mrs. Tisher at the same time grouped herself behind her chief, as representing Queen Elizabeth's first historical female friend at Tilbury fort. Miss Twinkleton then proceeded to remark that Rumour, Ladies, had been represented by the bard of Avon—needless were it to mention the immortal SHAKESPEARE, also called the Swan of his native river, not improbably with some reference to the ancient superstition that that bird of graceful plumage (Miss Jennings will please stand upright) sang sweetly on the approach of death, for which we have no ornithological authority,—Rumour, Ladies, had been represented by that bard—hem!—

"who drew
The celebrated Jew,"

as painted full of tongues. Rumour in Cloisterham (Miss Ferdinand will honour me with her attention) was no exception to the great limner's portrait of Rumour elsewhere. A slight *fracas* between two young gentlemen occurring last night within a hundred miles of these peaceful walls (Miss Ferdinand, being apparently incorrigible, will have the kindness to write out this evening, in the original language, the first four fables of our vivacious neighbour, Monsieur La Fontaine) had been very grossly exaggerated by Rumour's voice. In the first alarm and anxiety arising from our sympathy with a sweet young friend, not wholly to be dissociated from one of the gladiators in the bloodless arena in question (the impropriety of Miss Reynolds's appearing to stab herself in the hand with a pin, is far too obvious, and too glaringly unlady-like, to be pointed out), we descended from our maiden elevation to discuss this uncongenial and this unfit theme. Responsible inquiries having assured us that it was but one of those "airy nothings" pointed at by the Poet (whose name and date of birth Miss Giggles will supply within half an hour), we would now discard the subject, and concentrate our minds upon the grateful labours of the day.

But the subject so survived all day, nevertheless, that Miss Ferdinand got into new trouble by surreptitiously clapping on a paper moustache at dinner-time, and going through the motions of aiming a water-bottle at Miss Giggles, who drew a table-spoon in defence.

Now, Rosa thought of this unlucky quarrel a great deal, and thought of it with an uncomfortable feeling that she was involved in it, as cause, or consequence, or what not, through being in a false position altogether as to her marriage engagement. Never free from such uneasiness when she was with her affianced husband, it was not likely that she would be free from it when they were apart. To-day, too, she was cast in upon herself, and deprived of the relief of talking freely with her new friend, because the quarrel had been with Helena's brother, and Helena undisguisedly avoided the subject as a delicate and difficult one to herself. At this critical time, of all times, Rosa's guardian was announced as having come to see her.

Mr. Grewgious had been well selected for his trust, as a man of incorruptible integrity, but certainly for no other appropriate quality discernible on the surface. He was an arid, sandy man, who, if he had been put into a grinding-mill, looked as if he would have ground immediately into high-dried snuff. He had a scanty flat crop of hair, in colour and consistency like some very mangy yellow fur tippet; it was so unlike hair, that it must have been a wig, but for the stupendous improbability of anybody's voluntarily sporting such a head. The little play of feature that his face presented, was cut deep into it, in a few hard curves that made it more like work; and he had certain notches in his forehead, which looked as though Nature had been about to touch them into sensibility or refinement, when she had impatiently thrown away the chisel, and said: "I really cannot be worried to finish off this man; let him go as he is."

With too great length of throat at his upper end, and too much ankle-bone and heel at his lower; with an awkward and hesitating manner; with a shambling walk; and with what is called a near sight—which perhaps prevented his observing how much white cotton stocking he displayed to the public eye, in contrast with his black suit—Mr. Grewgious still had some strange capacity in him of making on the whole an agreeable impression.

Mr. Grewgious was discovered by his ward, much discomfited by being in Miss Twinkleton's company in Miss Twinkleton's own sacred room. Dim forebodings of being examined in something, and not coming well out of it, seemed to oppress the poor gentleman when found in these circumstances.

"My dear, how do you do? I am glad to see you. My dear, how much improved you are. Permit me to hand you a chair, my dear."

Miss Twinkleton rose at her little writing-table, saying, with general sweetness, as to the polite Universe: "Will you permit me to retire?"

"By no means, madam, on my account. I beg that you will not move."

"I must entreat permission to *move*," returned Miss Twinkleton, repeating the word with a charming grace; "but I will not withdraw, since you are so obliging. If I wheel my desk to this corner window, shall I be in the way?"

"Madam! In the way!"

"You are very kind.—Rosa, my dear, you will be under no restraint, I am sure."

Here Mr. Grewgious, left by the fire with Rosa, said again: "My dear, how do you do? I am glad to see you, my dear." And having waited for her to sit down, sat down himself.

"My visits," said Mr. Grewgious, "are, like those of the angels—not that I compare myself to an angel."

"No, sir," said Rosa.

"Not by any means," assented Mr. Grewgious. "I merely refer to my visits, which are few and far between. The angels are, we know very well, up-stairs."

Miss Twinkleton looked round with a kind of stiff stare.

"I refer, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, laying his hand on Rosa's, as the possibility thrilled through his frame of his otherwise seeming to take the awful liberty of calling Miss Twinkleton my dear; "I refer to the other young ladies."

Miss Twinkleton resumed her writing.

Mr. Grewgious, with a sense of not having managed his opening point quite as neatly as he might have desired, smoothed his head from back to front as if he had just dived, and were pressing the water out—this smoothing action, however superfluous, was habitual with him—and took a pocket-book from his coat-pocket, and a stump of black-lead pencil from his waistcoat-pocket.

"I made," he said, turning the leaves: "I made a guiding memorandum or so—as I usually do, for I have no conversational powers whatever—to which I will, with your permission, my dear, refer. 'Well and happy.' Truly. You are well and happy, my dear? You look so."

"Yes, indeed, sir," answered Rosa.

"For which," said Mr. Grewgious, with a bend of his head towards the corner window, "our warmest acknowledgments are due, and I am sure are rendered, to the maternal kindness and the constant care and consideration of the lady whom I have now the honour to see before me."

This point, again, made but a lame departure from Mr. Grewgious, and never got to its destination; for, Miss Twinkleton, feeling that the courtesies required her to be by this time quite outside the conversation, was biting the end of her pen, and looking upward, as waiting for the descent of an idea from any member of the Celestial Nine who might have one to spare.

Mr. Grewgious smoothed his smooth head again, and then made another reference to his pocket-book; lining out "well and happy," as disposed of.

" 'Pounds, shillings, and pence,' is my next note. A dry subject for a young lady, but an important subject too. Life is pounds, shillings, and pence. Death is—" A sudden recollection of the death of her two parents seemed to stop him, and he said in a softer tone, and evidently inserting the negative as an after-thought: "Death is *not* pounds, shillings, and pence."

His voice was as hard and dry as himself, and Fancy might have ground it straight, like himself, into high-dried snuff. And yet, through the very limited means of expression that he possessed, he seemed to express kindness. If Nature had but finished him off, kindness might have been recognisable in his face at this moment. But if the notches in his forehead wouldn't fuse together, and if his face would work and couldn't play, what could he do, poor man!

"'Pounds, shillings, and pence.' You find your allowance always sufficient for your wants, my dear?"

Rosa wanted for nothing, and therefore it was ample.

"And you are not in debt?"

Rosa laughed at the idea of being in debt. It seemed, to her inexperience, a comical vagary of the imagination. Mr. Grewgious stretched his near sight to be sure that this was her view of the case. "Ah!" he said, as comment, with a furtive glance towards Miss Twinkleton, and lining out pounds, shillings, and pence: "I spoke of having got among the angels! So I did!"

Rosa felt what his next memorandum would prove to be, and was blushing and folding a crease in her dress with one embarrassed hand, long before he found it.

"'Marriage.' Hem!" Mr. Grewgious carried his smoothing hand down over his eyes and nose, and even chin, before drawing his chair a little nearer, and speaking a little more confidentially: "I now touch, my dear, upon the point that is the direct cause of my troubling you with the present visit. Otherwise, being a particularly Angular man, I should not have intruded here. I am the last man to intrude into a sphere for which I am so entirely unfitted. I feel, on these premises, as if I was a bear—with the cramp—in a youthful Cotillon."

His ungainliness gave him enough of the air of his simile to set Rosa off laughing heartily.

"It strikes you in the same light," said Mr. Grewgious, with perfect calmness. "Just so. To return to my memorandum. Mr. Edwin has been to and fro here, as was arranged. You have mentioned that, in your quarterly letters to me. And you like him, and he likes you."

"I *like* him very much, sir," rejoined Rosa.

"So I said, my dear," returned her guardian, for whose ear the timid emphasis was much too fine. "Good. And you correspond."

"We write to one another," said Rosa, pouting, as she recalled their epistolary differences.

"Such is the meaning that I attach to the word 'correspond' in this application, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious. "Good. All goes well, time works on, and at this next Christmas-time it will become necessary, as a matter of form, to give the exemplary lady in the corner window, to whom we are so much indebted, business notice of your departure in the ensuing half-year. Your relations with her are far more than business relations, no doubt; but a residue of business remains in them, and business is business ever. I am a particularly Angular man," proceeded Mr. Grewgious, as if it suddenly occurred to him to mention it, "and I am not used to give anything away. If, for these two reasons, some competent Proxy would give *you* away, I should take it very kindly."

Rosa intimated, with her eyes, on the ground, that she thought a substitute might be found, if required.

"Surely, surely," said Mr. Grewgious. "For instance, the gentleman who teaches Dancing here—he would know how to do it with graceful propriety. He would advance and retire in a manner satisfactory to the feelings of the officiating clergyman, and of yourself, and the bridegroom, and all parties concerned. I am —I am a particularly Angular man," said Mr. Grewgious, as if he had made up his mind to screw it out at last: "and should only blunder."

Rosa sat still and silent. Perhaps her mind had not got quite so far as the ceremony yet, but was lagging on the way there.

"Memorandum, 'Will.' Now, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, referring to his notes, disposing of "Marriage" with his pencil, and taking a paper from his pocket: "although I have before possessed you with the contents of your father's will, I think it right at this time to leave a certified copy of it in your hands. And although Mr. Edwin is also aware of its contents, I think it right at this time likewise to place a certified copy of it in Mr. Jasper's hand——"

"Not in his own!" asked Rosa, looking up quickly. "Cannot the Copy go to Eddy himself?"

"Why, yes, my dear, if you particularly wish it; but I spoke of Mr. Jasper as being his trustee."

"I do particularly wish it, if you please," said Rosa, hurriedly and earnestly; "I don't like Mr. Jasper to come between us, in any way."

"It is natural, I suppose," said Mr. Grewgious, "that your young husband should be all in all. Yes. You observe that I say, I suppose. The fact is, I am a particularly Unnatural man, and I don't know from my own knowledge."

Rosa looked at him with some wonder.

"I mean," he explained, "that young ways were never my ways. I was the only offspring of parents far advanced in life, and I half believe I was born advanced in life myself. No personality is intended towards the name you will so soon change, when I remark that while the general growth of people seem to have come into existence, buds, I seem to have come into existence a chip. I was a chip—and a very dry one—when I first became aware of myself. Respecting the other certified copy, your wish shall be complied with. Respecting your inheritance, I think you know all. It is an annuity of two hundred and fifty pounds. The savings upon that annuity, and some other items to your credit, all duly carried to account, with vouchers, will place you in possession of a lump sum of money, rather exceeding Seventeen Hundred Pounds. I am empowered to advance the cost of your preparations for your marriage out of that fund. All is told."

"Will you please tell me," said Rosa, taking the paper with a prettily knitted brow, but not opening it: "whether I am right in what I am going to say? I can understand what you tell me, so very much better than what I read in law-writings. My poor papa and Eddy's father made their agreement together, as very dear and firm and fast friends, in order that we, too, might be very dear and firm and fast friends after them?"

"Just so."

"For the lasting good of both of us, and the lasting happiness of both of us?"

"Just so."

"That we might be to one another even much more than they had been to one another?"

"Just so."

"It was not bound upon Eddy, and it was not bound upon me, by any forfeit, in case——"

"Don't be agitated, my dear. In the case that it brings tears into your affectionate eyes even to picture to yourself—in the case of your not marrying one another—no, no forfeiture on either side. You would then have been my ward until you were of age. No worse would have befallen you. Bad enough perhaps!"

"And Eddy?"

"He would have come into his partnership derived from his father, and into its arrears to his credit (if any), on attaining his majority, just as now."

Rosa, with her perplexed face and knitted brow, bit the corner of her attested copy, as she sat with her head on one side, looking abstractedly on the floor, and smoothing it with her foot.

"In short," said Mr. Grewgious, "this betrothal is a wish, a sentiment, a friendly project, tenderly expressed on both sides. That it was strongly felt, and that there was a lively hope that it would prosper, there can be no doubt. When you were both children, you began to be accustomed to it, and it *has* prospered. But circumstances alter cases; and I made this visit to-day, partly, indeed principally, to discharge myself of the duty of telling you, my dear, that two young people can only be betrothed in marriage (except as a matter of convenience, and therefore mockery and misery) of their own free will, their own attachment, and their own assurance (it may or it may not prove a mistaken one, but we must take our chance of that), that they are suited to each other, and will make each other happy. Is it to be supposed, for example, that if either of your fathers were living now, and had any mistrust on that subject, his mind would not be changed by the change of circumstances involved in the change of your years? Untenable, unreasonable, inconclusive, and preposterous!"

Mr. Grewgious said all this, as if he were reading it aloud; or, still more, as if he were repeating a lesson. So expressionless of any approach to spontaneity were his face and manner.

"I have now, my dear," he added, blurring out "Will" with his pencil, "discharged myself of what is doubtless a formal duty in this case, but still a duty in such a case. Memorandum, 'Wishes.' My dear, is there any wish of yours that I can further?"

Rosa shook her head, with an almost plaintive air of hesitation in want of help.

"Is there any instruction that I can take from you with reference to your affairs?"

"I—I should like to settle them with Eddy first, if you please," said Rosa, plaiting the crease in her dress.

"Surely, surely," returned Mr. Grewgious. "You two should be of one mind in all things. Is the young gentleman expected shortly?"

"He has gone away only this morning. He will be back at Christmas."

"Nothing could happen better. You will, on his return at Christmas, arrange all matters of detail with him; you will then communicate with me; and I will discharge myself (as a mere business acquaintance) of my business responsibilities towards the accomplished lady in the corner window. They will accrue at that season." Blurring pencil once again. "Memorandum, 'Leave.' Yes. I will now, my dear, take my leave."

"Could I," said Rosa, rising, as he jerked out of his chair in his ungainly way: "could I ask you, most kindly to come to me at Christmas, if I had anything particular to say to you?"

"Why, certainly, certainly," he rejoined; apparently—if such a word can be used of one who had no apparent lights or shadows about him—complimented by the question. "As a particularly Angular man, I do not fit smoothly into the social circle, and consequently I have no other engagement at Christmas-time than to partake, on the twenty-fifth, of a boiled turkey and celery sauce with a—with a particularly Angular clerk I have the good fortune to possess, whose father, being a Norfolk farmer, sends him up (the turkey up), as a present to me, from the neighbourhood of Norwich. I should be quite proud of your wishing to see me, my dear. As a professional Receiver of rents, so very few people *do* wish to see me, that the novelty would be bracing."

For his ready acquiescence, the grateful Rosa put her hands upon his shoulders, stood on tiptoe, and instantly kissed him.

"Lord bless me!" cried Mr. Grewgious. "Thank you, my dear! The honour is almost equal to the pleasure. Miss Twinkleton, madam, I have had a most satisfactory conversation with my ward, and I will now release you from the incumbrance of my presence."

"Nay, sir," rejoined Miss Twinkleton, rising with a gracious condescension: "say not incumbrance. Not so, by any means. I cannot permit you to say so."

"Thank you, madam. I have read in the newspapers," said Mr. Grewgious, stammering a little, "that when a distinguished visitor (not that I am one: far from it) goes to a school (not that this is one: far from it), he asks for a holiday, or some sort of grace. It being now the afternoon in the—College—of which you are the eminent head, the young ladies might gain nothing, except in name, by having the rest of the day allowed them. But if there is any young lady at all under a cloud, might I solicit——"

"Ah, Mr. Grewgious, Mr. Grewgious!" cried Miss Twinkleton, with a chastely-rallying forefinger. "O you gentlemen, you gentlemen! Fie for shame, that you are so hard upon us poor maligned disciplinarians of our sex, for your sakes! But as Miss Ferdinand is at present weighed down by an incubus"—Miss Twinkleton might have said a pen-and-ink-ubus of writing out Monsieur La Fontaine—"go to her, Rosa my dear, and tell her the penalty is remitted in deference to the intercession of your guardian, Mr. Grewgious."

Miss Twinkleton here achieved a curtsey, suggestive of marvels happening to her respected legs, and which she came out of nobly, three yards behind her starting-point.

As he held it incumbent upon him to call on Mr. Jasper before leaving Cloisterham, Mr. Grewgious went to the gatehouse, and climbed its postern stair. But Mr. Jasper's door being closed, and presenting on a slip of paper the word "Cathedral," the fact of its being service-time was borne into the mind of Mr. Grewgious. So he descended the stair again, and, crossing the Close, paused at the great western folding-door of the Cathedral, which stood open on the fine and bright, though short-lived, afternoon, for the airing of the place.

"Dear me," said Mr. Grewgious, peeping in, "it's like looking down the throat of Old Time."

Old Time heaved a mouldy sigh from tomb and arch and vault; and gloomy shadows began to deepen in corners; and damps began to rise from green patches of stone; and jewels cast upon the pavement of the nave from stained glass by the declining sun, began to perish. Within the grill-gate of the chancel, up the steps surmounted loomingly by the fast-darkening organ, white robes could be dimly seen, and one feeble voice, rising and falling in a cracked monotonous mutter, could at intervals be faintly heard. In the free outer air, the river, the green pastures, and the brown arable lands, the teeming hills and dales, were reddened by the sunset: while the distant little windows in windmills and farm homesteads, shone, patches of bright beaten gold. In the Cathedral, all became gray, murky, and sepulchral, and the cracked monotonous mutter went on like a dying voice, until the organ and the choir burst forth, and drowned it in a sea of music. Then, the sea fell, and the dying voice made another feeble effort, and then the sea rose high, and beat its life out, and lashed the roof, and surged among the arches, and pierced the heights of the great tower; and then the sea was dry, and all was still.

Mr. Grewgious had by that time walked to the chancel-steps, where he met the living waters coming out.

"Nothing is the matter?" Thus Jasper accosted him, rather quickly. "You have not been sent for?"

"Not at all; not at all. I came down of my own accord. I have been to my pretty ward's, and am now homeward bound again."

"You found her thriving?"

"Blooming indeed. Most blooming. I merely came to tell her, seriously, what a betrothal by deceased parents is."

"And what is it—according to your judgment?"

Mr. Grewgious noticed the whiteness of the lips that asked the question, and put it down to the chilling account of the Cathedral.

"I merely came to tell her that it could not be considered binding, against any such reason for its dissolution as a want of affection, or want of disposition to carry it into effect, on the side of either party."

"May I ask, had you any special reason for telling her that?"

Mr. Grewgious answered somewhat sharply: "The especial reason of doing my duty, sir. Simply that." Then he added: "Come, Mr. Jasper; I know your affection for your nephew, and that you are quick to feel on his behalf. I assure you that this implies not the least doubt of, or disrespect to, your nephew."

"You could not," returned Jasper, with a friendly pressure of his arm, as they walked on side by side, "speak more handsomely."

Mr. Grewgious pulled off his hat to smooth his head, and, having smoothed it, nodded it contentedly, and put his hat on again.

"I will wager," said Jasper, smiling—his lips were still so white that he was conscious of it, and bit and moistened them while speaking: "I will wager that she hinted no wish to be released from Ned."

"And you will win your wager if you do," retorted Mr. Grewgious. "We should allow some margin for little maidenly delicacies in a young motherless creature, under such circumstances, I suppose; it is not in my line; what do you think?"

"There can be no doubt of it."

"I am glad you say so. Because," proceeded Mr. Grewgious, who had all this time very knowingly felt his way round to action on his remembrance of what she had said of Jasper himself: "because she seems to have some little delicate instinct that all preliminary arrangements had best be made between Mr. Edwin Drood and herself, don't you see? She don't want us, don't you know?"

Jasper touched himself on the breast, and said, somewhat indistinctly: "You mean me."

Mr. Grewgious touched himself on the breast, and said: "I mean us. Therefore, let them have their little discussions and councils together, when Mr. Edwin Drood comes back here at Christmas; and then you and I will step in, and put the final touches to the business."

"So, you settled with her that you would come back at Christmas?" observed Jasper. "I see! Mr. Grewgious, as you quite fairly said just now, there is such an exceptional attachment between my nephew and me, that I am more sensitive for the dear, fortunate, happy, happy fellow than for myself. But it is only right that the young lady should be considered, as you have pointed out, and that I should accept my cue from you. I accept it. I understand that at Christmas they will complete their preparations for May, and that their marriage will be put in final train by themselves, and that nothing will remain for us but to put ourselves in train also, and have everything ready for our formal release from our trusts, on Edwin's birthday."

"That is my understanding," assented Mr. Grewgious, as they shook hands to part. "God bless them both!"

"God save them both!" cried Jasper.

"I said, bless them," remarked the former, looking back over his shoulder.

"I said, save them," returned the latter. "Is there any difference?'

CHAPTER X

SMOOTHING THE WAY

It has been often enough remarked that women have a curious power of divining the characters of men; which would seem to be innate and instinctive; seeing that it is arrived at through no patient process of reasoning, that it can give no satisfactory or sufficient account of itself, and that it pronounces in the most confident manner even against accumulated observation on the part of the other sex. But it has not been quite so often remarked that this power (fallible, like every other human attribute) is for the most part absolutely incapable of self-revision; and that when it has delivered an adverse opinion which by all human lights is subsequently proved to have failed, it is undistinguishable from prejudice, in respect of its determination not to be corrected. Nay, the very possibility of contradiction or disproof, however remote, communicates to this feminine judgment from the first, in nine cases out of ten, the weakness attendant on the testimony of an interested witness; so personally and strongly does the fair diviner connect herself with her divination.

"Now, don't you think, Ma dear," said the Minor Canon to his mother one day as she sat at her knitting in his little book-room, "that you are rather hard on Mr. Neville?"

"No, I do *not*, Sept," returned the old lady.

"Let us discuss it, Ma."

"I have no objection to discuss it, Sept. I trust, my dear, I am always open to discussion." There was a vibration in the old lady's cap, as though she internally added: "and I should like to see the discussion that would change *my* mind!"

"Very good, Ma," said her conciliatory son. "There is nothing like being open to discussion."

"I hope not, my dear," returned the old lady, evidently shut to it.

"Well! Mr. Neville, on that unfortunate occasion, commits himself under provocation."

"And under mulled wine," added the old lady.

"I must admit the wine. Though I believe the two young men were much alike in that regard."

"I don't," said the old lady.

"Why not, Ma?"

"Because I *don't*," said the old lady. "Still, I am quite open to discussion."

"But, my dear Ma, I cannot see how we are to discuss, if you take that line."

"Blame Mr. Neville for it, Sept, and not me," said the old lady, with stately severity.

"My dear Ma! why Mr. Neville?"

"Because," said Mrs. Crisparkle, retiring on first principles, "he came home intoxicated, and did great discredit to this house, and showed great disrespect to this family."

"That is not to be denied, Ma. He was then, and he is now, very sorry for it."

"But for Mr. Jasper's well-bred consideration in coming up to me, next day, after service, in the Nave itself, with his gown still on, and expressing his hope that I had not been greatly alarmed or had my rest violently broken, I believe I might never have heard of that disgraceful transaction," said the old lady.

"To be candid, Ma, I think I should have kept it from you if I could: though I had not decidedly made up my mind. I was following Jasper out, to confer with him on the subject, and to consider the expediency of his and my jointly hushing the thing up on all accounts, when I found him speaking to you. Then it was too late."

"Too late, indeed, Sept. He was still as pale as gentlemanly ashes at what had taken place in his rooms overnight."

"If I *had* kept it from you, Ma, you may be sure it would have been for your peace and quiet, and for the good of the young men, and in my best discharge of my duty according to my lights."

The old lady immediately walked across the room and kissed him: saying, "Of course, my dear Sept, I am sure of that."

"However, it became the town-talk," said Mr. Crisparkle, rubbing his ear, as his mother resumed her seat, and her knitting, "and passed out of my power."

"And I said then, Sept," returned the old lady, "that I thought ill of Mr. Neville. And I say now, that I think ill of Mr. Neville. And I said then, and I say now, that I hope Mr. Neville may come to good, but I don't believe he will." Here the cap vibrated again considerably.

"I am sorry to hear you say so, Ma——"

"I am sorry to say so, my dear," interposed the old lady, knitting on firmly, "but I can't help it."

"—For," pursued the Minor Canon, "it is undeniable that Mr. Neville is exceedingly industrious and attentive, and that he improves apace, and that he has—I hope I may say—an attachment to me."

"There is no merit in the last article, my dear," said the old lady, quickly; "and if he says there is, I think the worse of him for the boast."

"But, my dear Ma, he never said there was."

"Perhaps not," returned the old lady; "still, I don't see that it greatly signifies."

There was no impatience in the pleasant look with which Mr. Crisparkle contemplated the pretty old piece of china as it knitted; but there was, certainly, a humorous sense of its not being a piece of china to argue with very closely.

"Besides, Sept, ask yourself what he would be without his sister. You know what an influence she has over him; you know what a capacity she has; you know that whatever he reads with you, he reads with her. Give her her fair share of your praise, and how much do you leave for him?"

At these words Mr. Crisparkle fell into a little reverie, in which he thought of several things. He thought of the times he had seen the brother and sister together in deep converse over one of his own old college books; now, in the rimy mornings, when he made those sharpening pilgrimages to Cloisterham Weir; now, in the sombre evenings, when he faced the wind at sunset, having climbed his favourite outlook, a beetling fragment of monastery ruin; and the two studious figures passed below him along the margin of the river, in which the town fires and lights already shone, making the landscape bleaker. He thought how the consciousness had stolen upon him that in teaching one, he was teaching two; and how he had almost insensibly adapted his explanations to both minds—that with which his own was daily in contact, and that which he only approached through it. He thought of the gossip that had reached him from the Nuns' House, to the effect that Helena, whom he had mistrusted as so proud and fierce, submitted herself to the fairy-bride (as he called her), and learnt from her what she knew. He thought of the picturesque alliance between those two, externally so very different. He thought—perhaps most of all—could it be that these things were yet but so many weeks old, and had become an integral part of his life?

As, whenever the Reverend Septimus fell a-musing, his good mother took it to be an infallible sign that he "wanted support," the blooming old lady made all haste to the dining-room closet, to produce from it the support embodied in a glass of Constantia and a home-made biscuit. It was a most wonderful closet, worthy of Cloisterham and of Minor Canon Corner. Above it, a portrait of Handel in a flowing wig beamed down at the spectator, with a knowing air of being up to the contents of the closet, and a musical air of intending to combine all its harmonies in one delicious fugue. No common closet with a vulgar door on hinges, openable all at once, and leaving nothing to be disclosed by degrees, this rare closet had a lock in mid-air, where two perpendicular slides met ; the one falling down, and the other pushing up. The upper slide, on being pulled down (leaving the lower a double mystery), revealed deep shelves of pickle-jars, jam-pots, tin canisters, spice-boxes, and agreeably outlandish vessels of blue and white, the luscious lodgings of preserved tamarinds and ginger. Every benevolent inhabitant of this retreat had his name inscribed upon his stomach. The pickles, in a uniform of rich brown double-breasted buttoned coat, and yellow or sombre drab continuations, announced their portly forms, in printed capitals, as Walnut, Gherkin, Onion, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Mixed, and other members of that noble family. The jams, as being of a less masculine temperament, and as wearing curlpapers, announced themselves in feminine caligraphy, like a soft whisper, to be Raspberry, Gooseberry, Apricot, Plum, Damson, Apple, and Peach. The scene closing on these charmers, and the lower slide ascending, oranges were revealed, attended by a mighty japanned sugar-box, to temper their acerbity if unripe. Home-made biscuits waited at the Court of these Powers, accompanied by a goodly fragment of plum-cake, and various slender ladies' fingers, to be dipped into sweet wine and kissed. Lowest of all, a compact leaden vault enshrined the sweet wine and a stock of cordials: whence issued whispers of Seville Orange, Lemon, Almond, and Caraway-seed. There was a crowning air upon this closet of closets, of having been for ages hummed through by the Cathedral bell and organ, until those venerable bees had made sublimated honey of everything in store; and it was always observed that every dipper among the shelves (deep, as has been noticed, and swallowing up head, shoulders, and elbows) came forth again mellow-faced, and seeming to have undergone a saccharine transfiguration.

The Reverend Septimus yielded himself up quite as willing a victim to a nauseous medicinal herb-closet, also presided over by the china shepherdess, as to this glorious cupboard. To what amazing infusions of gentian, peppermint, gilli-flower, sage, parsley, thyme, rue, rosemary, and dandelion, did his courageous stomach submit itself! In what wonderful wrappers, enclosing layers of dried leaves, would he swathe his rosy and contented face, if his mother suspected him of a toothache! What botanical blotches would he cheerfully stick upon his cheek, or forehead, if the dear old lady convicted him of an imperceptible pimple there! Into this herbaceous penitentiary, situated on an upper staircase landing: a low and narrow whitewashed cell, where bunches of dried leaves hung from rusty hooks in the ceiling, and were spread out upon shelves, in company with portentous bottles: would the Reverend Septimus submissively be led, like the highly popular lamb who has so long and unresistingly been led to the slaughter, and there would he, unlike that lamb, bore nobody but himself. Not even doing that much, so that the old lady were busy and pleased, he would quietly swallow what was given him, merely taking a corrective dip of hands and face into the great bowl of dried rose-leaves, and into the other great bowl of dried lavender, and then would go out, as confident in the sweetening powers of Cloisterham Weir and a wholesome mind, as Lady Macbeth was hopeless of those of all the seas that roll.

In the present instance the good Minor Canon took his glass of Constantia with an excellent grace, and, so supported to his mother's satisfaction, applied himself to the remaining duties of the day. In their orderly and punctual progress they brought round Vesper Service and twilight. The Cathedral being very cold, he set off for a brisk trot after service; the trot to end in a charge at his favourite fragment of ruin, which was to be carried by storm, without a pause for breath.

He carried it in a masterly manner, and, not breathed even then, stood looking down upon the river. The river at Cloisterham is sufficiently near the sea to throw up oftentimes a quantity of seaweed. An unusual quantity had come in, with the last tide, and this, and the confusion of the water, and the restless dipping and flapping of the noisy gulls, and an angry light out seaward beyond the brown-sailed barges that were turning black, foreshadowed a stormy night. In his mind he was contrasting the wild and noisy sea with the quiet harbour of Minor Canon Corner, when Helena and Neville Landless passed below him. He had had the two together in his thoughts all day, and at once climbed down to speak to them together. The footing was rough in an uncertain light for any tread save that of a good climber; but the Minor Canon was as good a climber as most men, and stood beside them before many good climbers would have been halfway down.

"A wild evening, Miss Landless! Do you not find your usual walk with your brother too exposed and cold for the time of year? Or at all events, when the sun is down, and the weather is driving in from the sea?"

Helena thought not. It was their favourite walk. It was very retired.

"It is very retired," assented Mr. Crisparkle, laying hold of his opportunity straightway, and walking on with them. "It is a place of all others where one can speak without interruption, as I wish to do. Mr. Neville, I believe you tell your sister everything that passes between us?"

"Everything, sir."

"Consequently," said Mr. Crisparkle, "your sister is aware that I have repeatedly urged you to make some kind of apology for that unfortunate occurrence which befell on the night of your arrival here."

In saying it he looked to her, and not to him; therefore it was she, and not he, who replied:

"Yes."

"I call it unfortunate, Miss Helena," resumed Mr. Crisparkle, "forasmuch as it certainly has engendered a prejudice against Neville. There is a notion about, that he is a dangerously passionate fellow, of an uncontrollable and furious temper; he is really avoided as such."

"I have no doubt he is, poor fellow," said Helena, with a look of proud compassion at her brother, expressing a deep sense of his being ungenerously treated. "I should be quite sure of it, from your saying so; but what you tell me is confirmed by suppressed hints and references that I meet with every day."

"Now," Mr. Crisparkle again resumed, in a tone of mild though firm persuasion, "is not this to be regretted, and ought it not to be amended? These are early days of Neville's in Cloisterham, and I have no fear of his outliving such a prejudice, and proving himself to have been misunderstood. But how much wiser to take action at once, than to trust to uncertain time! Besides, apart from its being politic, it is right. For there can be no question that Neville was wrong."

"He was provoked," Helena submitted.

"He was the assailant," Mr. Crisparkle submitted.

They walked on in silence, until Helena raised her eyes to the Minor Canon's face, and said, almost reproachfully: "O Mr. Crisparkle, would you have Neville throw himself at young Drood's feet, or at Mr. Jasper's, who maligns him every day? In your heart you cannot mean it. From your heart you could not do it, if his case were yours."

"I have represented to Mr. Crisparkle, Helena," said Neville, with a glance of deference towards his tutor, "that if I could do it from my heart, I would. But I cannot, and I revolt from the pretence. You forget, however, that to put the case to Mr. Crisparkle as his own, is to suppose Mr. Crisparkle to have done what I did."

"I ask his pardon," said Helena.

"You see," remarked Mr. Crisparkle, again laying hold of his opportunity, though with a moderate and delicate touch, "you both instinctively acknowledge that Neville did wrong. Then why stop short, and not otherwise acknowledge it?"

"Is there no difference," asked Helena, with a little faltering in her manner, "between submission to a generous spirit, and submission to a base or trivial one?"

Before the worthy Minor Canon was quite ready with his argument in reference to this nice distinction, Neville struck in:

"Help me to clear myself with Mr. Crisparkle, Helena. Help me to convince him that I cannot be the first to make concessions without mockery and falsehood. My nature must be changed before I can do so, and it is not changed. I am sensible of inexpressible affront, and deliberate aggravation of inexpressible affront, and I am angry. The plain truth is, I am still as angry when I recall that night as I was that night."

"Neville," hinted the Minor Canon, with a steady countenance, "you have repeated that former action of your hands, which I so much dislike."

"I am sorry for it, sir, but it was involuntary. I confessed that I was still as angry."

"And I confess," said Mr. Crisparkle, "that I hoped for better things."

"I am sorry to disappoint you, sir, but it would be far worse to deceive you, and I should deceive you grossly if I pretended that you had softened me in this respect. The time may come when your powerful influence will do even that with the difficult pupil whose antecedents you know; but it has not come yet. Is this so, and in spite of my struggles against myself, Helena?"

She, whose dark eyes were watching the effect of what he said on Mr. Crisparkle's face, replied—to Mr. Crisparkle, not to him: "It is so." After a short pause, she answered the slightest look of inquiry conceivable, in her brother's eyes, with as slight an affirmative bend of her own head; and he went on:

"I have never yet had the courage to say to you, sir, what in full openness I ought to have said when you first talked with me on this subject. It is not easy to say, and I have been withheld by a fear of its seeming ridiculous, which is very strong upon me down to this last moment, and might, but for my sister, prevent my being quite open with you even now—I admire Miss Bud, sir, so very much, that I cannot bear her being treated with conceit or indifference; and even if I did not feel that I had an injury against young Drood on my own account, I should feel that I had an injury against him on hers."

Mr. Crisparkle, in utter amazement, looked at Helena for corroboration, and met in her expressive face full corroboration, and a plea for advice.

"The young lady of whom you speak is, as you know, Mr. Neville, shortly to be married," said Mr. Crisparkle, gravely; "therefore your admiration, if it be of that special nature which you seem to indicate, is outrageously misplaced. Moreover, it is monstrous that you should take upon yourself to be the young lady's champion against her chosen husband. Besides, you have seen them only once. The young lady has become your sister's friend; and I wonder that your sister, even on her behalf, has not checked you in this irrational and culpable fancy."

"She has tried, sir, but uselessly. Husband or no husband, that fellow is incapable of the feeling with which I am inspired towards the beautiful young creature whom he treats like a doll. I say he is as incapable of it, as he is unworthy of her. I say she is sacrificed in being bestowed upon him. I say that I love her, and despise and hate him!" This with a face so flushed, and a gesture so violent, that his sister crossed to his side, and caught his arm, remonstrating "Neville, Neville!"

Thus recalled to himself, he quickly became sensible of having lost the guard he had set upon his passionate tendency, and covered his face with his hand, as one repentant and wretched.

Mr. Crisparkle, watching him attentively, and at the same time meditating how to proceed, walked on for some paces in silence. Then he spoke:

"Mr. Neville, Mr. Neville, I am sorely grieved to see in you more traces of a character as sullen, angry, and wild, as the night now closing in. They are of too serious an aspect to leave me the resource of treating the infatuation you have disclosed, as undeserving serious consideration. I give it very serious consideration, and I speak to you accordingly. This feud between you and young Drood must not go on. I cannot permit it to go on any longer, knowing what I now know from you, and your living under my roof. Whatever prejudiced and unauthorised constructions your blind and envious wrath may put upon his character, it is a frank, good-natured character. I know I can trust to it for that. Now, pray, observe what I am about to say. On reflection, and on your sister's representation, I am willing to admit that, in making peace with young Drood, you have a right to be met half-way. I will engage that you shall be, and even that young Drood shall make the first advance. This condition fulfilled, you will pledge me the honour of a Christian gentleman that the quarrel is for ever at an end on your side. What may be in your heart when you give him your hand, can only be known to the Searcher of all hearts; but it will never go well with you if there be any treachery there. So far, as to that; next as to what I must again speak of as your infatuation. I understand it to have been confided to me, and to be known to no other person save your sister and yourself. Do I understand aright?"

Helena answered in a low voice: "It is only known to us three who are here together."

"It is not at all known to the young lady, your friend?"

"On my soul, no!"

"I require you, then, to give me your similar and solemn pledge, Mr. Neville, that it shall remain the secret it is, and that you will take no other action whatsoever upon it than endeavouring (and that most earnestly) to erase it from your mind. I will not tell you that it will soon pass; I will not tell you that it is the fancy of the moment; I will not tell you that such caprices have their rise and fall among the young and ardent every hour; I will leave you undisturbed in the belief that it has few parallels or none, that it will abide with you a long time, and that it will be very difficult to conquer. So much the more weight shall I attach to the pledge I require from you, when it is unreservedly given."

The young man twice or thrice essayed to speak, but failed.

"Let me leave you with your sister, whom it is time you took home," said Mr. Crisparkle. "You will find me alone in my room by and by."

"Pray do not leave us yet," Helena implored him. "Another minute."

"I should not," said Neville, pressing his hand upon his face, "have needed so much as another minute, if you had been less patient with me, Mr. Crisparkle, less considerate of me, and less unpretendingly good and true. O, if in my childhood I had known such a guide!"

"Follow your guide now, Neville," murmured Helena, "and follow him to Heaven!"

There was that in her tone which broke the good Minor Canon's voice, or it would have repudiated her exaltation of him. As it was, he laid a finger on his lips, and looked towards her brother.

"To say that I give both pledges, Mr. Crisparkle, out of my innermost heart, and to say that there is no treachery in it, is to say nothing!" Thus Neville, greatly moved. "I beg your forgiveness for my miserable lapse into a burst of passion."

"Not mine, Neville, not mine. You know with whom forgiveness lies, as the highest attribute conceivable. Miss Helena, you and your brother are twin children. You came into this world with the same dispositions, and you passed your younger days together surrounded by the same adverse circumstances. What you have overcome in yourself, can you not overcome in him? You see the rock that lies in his course. Who but you can keep him clear of it?"

"Who but you, sir?" replied Helena. "What is my influence, or my weak wisdom, compared with yours?"

"You have the wisdom of Love," returned the Minor Canon, "and it was the highest wisdom ever known upon this earth, remember. As to mine—but the less said of that commonplace commodity the better. Good night!"

She took the hand he offered her, and gratefully and almost reverently raised it to her lips.

"Tut!" said the Minor Canon softly, "I am much overpaid!" and turned away.

Retracing his steps towards the Cathedral Close, he tried, as he went along in the dark, to think out the best means of bringing to pass what he had promised to effect, and what must somehow be done. "I shall probably be asked to marry them," he reflected, "and I would they were married and gone! But this presses first." He debated principally whether he should write to young Drood, or whether he should speak to Jasper. The consciousness of being popular with the whole Cathedral establishment inclined him to the latter course, and the well-timed sight of the lighted gatehouse decided him to take it. "I will strike while the iron is hot," he said, "and see him now."

Jasper was lying asleep on a couch before the fire, when, having ascended the postern-stair, and received no answer to his knock at the door, Mr. Crisparkle gently turned the handle and looked in. Long afterwards he had cause to remember how Jasper sprang from the couch in a delirious state between sleeping and waking, and crying out: "What is the matter? Who did it?"

"It is only I, Jasper. I am sorry to have disturbed you."

The glare of his eyes settled down into a look of recognition, and he moved a chair or two, to make a way to the fireside.

"I was dreaming at a great rate, and am glad to be disturbed from an indigestive after-dinner sleep. Not to mention that you are always welcome."

"Thank you. I am not confident," returned Mr. Crisparkle, as he sat himself down in the easy-chair placed for him, "that my subject will at first sight be quite as welcome as myself; but I am a minister of peace, and I pursue my subject in the interests of peace. In a word, Jasper, I want to establish peace between these two young fellows."

A very perplexed expression took hold of Mr. Jasper's face; a very perplexing expression too, for Crisparkle could make nothing of it.

"How?" was Jasper's inquiry, in a low and slow voice, after a silence.

"For the 'How' I come to you. I want to ask you to do me the great favour and service of interposing with your nephew (I have already interposed with Mr. Neville), and getting him to write you a short note, in his lively way, saying that he is willing to shake hands. I know what a good-natured fellow he is, and what influence you have with him. And without in the least defending Mr. Neville, we must all admit that he was bitterly stung."

Jasper turned that perplexed face towards the fire. Mr. Crisparkle continuing to observe it, found it even more perplexing than before, inasmuch as it seemed to denote (which could hardly be) some close internal calculation.

"I know that you are not prepossessed in Mr. Neville's favour," the Minor Canon was going on, when Jasper stopped him:

"You have cause to say so. I am not, indeed."

"Undoubtedly; and I admit his lamentable violence of temper, though I hope he and I will get the better of it between us. But I have exacted a very solemn promise from him as to his future demeanour towards your nephew, if you do kindly interpose; and I am sure he will keep it."

"You are always responsible and trustworthy, Mr. Crisparkle. Do you really feel sure that you can answer for him so confidently?"

"I do."

The perplexed and perplexing look vanished.

"Then you relieve my mind of a great dread, and a heavy weight," said Jasper; "I will do it."

Mr. Crisparkle, delighted by the swiftness and completeness of his success, acknowledged it in the handsomest terms.

"I will do it," repeated Jasper, "for the comfort of having your guarantee against my vague and unfounded fears. You will laugh—but do you keep a Diary?"

"A line for a day; not more."

"A line for a day would be quite as much as my uneventful life would need, Heaven knows," said Jasper, taking a book from a desk, "but that my Diary is, in fact, a Diary of Ned's life too. You will laugh at his entry; you will guess when it was made:

> " 'Past midnight.—After what I have just now seen, I have a morbid dread upon me of some horrible consequences resulting to my dear boy, that I cannot reason with or in any way contend against. All my efforts are vain. The demoniacal passion of this Neville Landless, his strength in his fury, and his savage rage for the destruction of its object, appal me. So profound is the impression, that twice since I have gone into my dear boy's room, to assure myself of his sleeping safely, and not lying dead in his blood.'

"Here is another entry next morning:

> " 'Ned up and away. Light-hearted and unsuspicious as ever. He laughed when I cautioned him, and said he was as good a man as Neville Landless any day. I told him that might be, but he was not as bad a man. He continued to make light of it, but I travelled with him as far as I could, and left him most unwillingly. I am unable to shake off these dark intangible presentiments of evil—if feelings founded upon staring facts are to be so called.'

"Again and again," said Jasper, in conclusion, twirling the leaves of the book before putting it by, "I have relapsed into these moods, as other entries show. But I have now your assurance at my back, and shall put it in my book, and make it an antidote to my black humours."

"Such an antidote, I hope," returned Mr. Crisparkle, "as will induce you before long to consign the black humours to the flames. I ought to be the last to find any fault with you this evening, when you have met my wishes so freely; but I must say, Jasper, that your devotion to your nephew has made you exaggerative here."

"You are my witness," said Jasper, shrugging his shoulders, "what my state of mind honestly was, that night, before I sat down to write, and in what words I expressed it. You remembered objecting to a word I used, as being too strong? It was a stronger word than any in my Diary."

"Well, well. Try the antidote," rejoined Mr. Crisparkle; "and may it give you a brighter and better view of the case! We will discuss it no more now. I have to thank you for myself, and I thank you sincerely."

"You shall find," said Jasper, as they shook hands, "that I will not do the thing you wish me to do, by halves. I will take care that Ned, giving way at all, shall give way thoroughly."

On the third day after this conversation, he called on Mr. Crisparkle with the following letter:

"MY DEAR JACK,

"I am touched by your account of your interview with Mr. Crisparkle, whom I much respect and esteem. At once I openly say that I forgot myself on that occasion quite as much as Mr. Landless did, and that I wish that bygone to be a bygone, and all to be right again.

"Look here, dear old boy. Ask Mr. Landless to dinner on Christmas Eve (the better the day the better the deed), and let there be only we three, and let us shake hands all round there and then, and say no more about it.

"My dear Jack,
"Ever your most affectionate,
"EDWIN DROOD.

"P.S. Love to Miss Pussy at the next music-lesson."

"You expect Mr. Neville, then?" said Mr. Crisparkle.

"I count upon his coming," said Mr. Jasper.

CHAPTER XI

A PICTURE AND A RING

Behind the most ancient part of Holborn, London, where certain gabled houses some centuries of age still stand looking on the public way, as if disconsolately looking for the Old Bourne that has long run dry, is a little nook composed of two irregular quadrangles, called Staple Inn. It is one of those nooks, the turning into which out of the clashing street imparts to the relieved pedestrian the sensation of having put cotton in his ears, and velvet soles on his boots. It is one of those nooks where a few smoky sparrows twitter in smoky trees, as though they called to one another, "Let us play at country," and where a few feet of garden-mould and a few yards of gravel enable them to do that refreshing violence to their tiny understandings. Moreover, it is one of those nooks which are legal nooks; and it contains a little Hall, with a little lantern in its roof: to what obstructive purposes devoted, and at whose expense, this history knoweth not.

In the days when Cloisterham took offence at the existence of a railroad afar off, as menacing that sensitive constitution, the property of us Britons: the odd fortune of which sacred institution it is to be in exactly equal degrees croaked about, trembled for, and boasted of, whatever happens to anything, anywhere in the world: in those days no neighbouring architecture of lofty proportions had arisen to overshadow Staple Inn. The westering sun bestowed bright glances on it, and the south-west wind blew into it unimpeded.

Neither wind nor sun, however, favoured Staple Inn one December afternoon towards six o'clock, when it was filled with fog, and candles shed murky and blurred rays through the windows of all its then-occupied sets of chambers; notably from a set of chambers in a corner house in the little inner quadrangle, presenting in black and white over its ugly portal the mysterious inscription:

P
J T
1747.

In which set of chambers, never having troubled his head about the inscription, unless to bethink himself at odd times on glancing up at it, that haply it might mean Perhaps John Thomas, or Perhaps Joe Tyler, sat Mr. Grewgious writing by his fire.

Who could have told, by looking at Mr. Grewgious, whether he had ever known ambition or disappointment? He had been bred to the Bar, and had laid himself out for chamber practice; to draw deeds; "convey the wise it call," as Pistol says. But Conveyancing and he had made such a very indifferent marriage of it that they had separated by consent—if there can be said to be separation where there has never been coming together.

No. Coy Conveyancing would not come to Mr. Grewgious. She was wooed, not won, and they went their several ways. But an Arbitration being blown towards him by some unaccountable wind, and he gaining great credit in it as one indefatigable in seeking out right and doing right, a pretty fat Receivership was next blown into his pocket by a wind more traceable to its source. So, by chance, he had found his niche. Receiver and Agent now, to two rich estates, and deputing their legal business, in an amount worth having, to a firm of solicitors on the floor below, he had snuffed out his ambition (supposing him to have ever lighted it), and had settled down with his snuffers for the rest of his life under the dry vine and fig-tree of P. J.T., who planted in seventeen-forty-seven.

Many accounts and account-books, many files of correspondence, and several strong boxes, garnished Mr. Grewgious's room. They can scarcely be represented as having lumbered it, so conscientious and precise was their orderly arrangement. The apprehension of dying suddenly, and leaving one fact or one figure with any incompleteness or obscurity attaching to it, would have stretched Mr. Grewgious stone-dead any day. The largest fidelity to a trust was the life-blood of the man. There are sorts of life-blood that course more quickly, more gaily, more attractively; but there is no better sort in circulation.

There was no luxury in this room. Even its comforts were limited to its being dry and warm, and having a snug though faded fireside. What may be called its private life was confined to the hearth, and an easy-chair, and an old-fashioned occasional round table that was brought out upon the rug after business hours, from a corner where it elsewise remained turned up like a shining mahogany shield. Behind it, when standing thus on the defensive, was a closet, usually containing something good to drink. An outer room was the clerk's room; Mr. Grewgious's sleeping-room was across the common stair; and he held some not empty cellarage at the bottom of the common stair. Three hundred days in the year, at least, he crossed over to the hotel in Furnival's Inn for his dinner, and after dinner crossed back again, to make the most of these simplicities until it should become broad business day once more, with P. J. T., date seventeen-forty-seven.

As Mr. Grewgious sat and wrote by his fire that afternoon, so did the clerk of Mr. Grewgious sit and write by *his* fire. A pale, puffy-faced, dark-haired person of thirty, with big dark eyes that wholly wanted lustre, and a dissatisfied doughy complexion that seemed to ask to be sent to the baker's, this attendant was a mysterious being, possessed of some strange power over Mr. Grewgious. As though he had been called into existence, like a fabulous Familiar, by a magic spell which had failed when required to dismiss him, he stuck tight to Mr. Grewgious's stool, although Mr. Grewgious's comfort and convenience would manifestly have been advanced by dispossessing him. A gloomy person with tangled locks, and a general air of having been reared under the shadow of that baleful tree of Java which has given shelter to more lies than the whole botanical kingdom, Mr. Grewgious, nevertheless, treated him with unaccountable consideration.

"Now, Bazzard," said Mr. Grewgious, on the entrance of his clerk: looking up from his papers as he arranged them for the night: "what is in the wind besides fog?"

"Mr. Drood," said Bazzard.

"What of him?"

"Has called," said Bazzard.

"You might have shown him in."

"I am doing it," said Bazzard.

The visitor came in accordingly.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Grewgious, looking round his pair of office candles. "I thought you had called and merely left your name and gone. How do you do, Mr. Edwin? Dear me, you're choking!"

"It's this fog," returned Edwin; "and it makes my eyes smart, like Cayenne pepper."

"Is it really so bad as that? Pray undo your wrappers. It's fortunate I have so good a fire; but Mr. Bazzard has taken care of me."

"No I haven't," said Mr. Bazzard at the door.

"Ah! then it follows that I must have taken care of myself without observing it," said Mr. Grewgious. "Pray be seated in my chair. No. I beg! Coming out of such an atmosphere, in *my* chair."

Edwin took the easy-chair in the corner; and the fog he had brought in with him, and the fog he took off with his greatcoat and neck-shawl, was speedily licked up by the eager fire.

"I look," said Edwin, smiling, "as if I had come to stop."

"By the by," cried Mr. Grewgious; "excuse my interrupting you; do stop. The fog may clear in an hour or two. We can have dinner in from just across Holborn. You had better take your cayenne pepper here than outside; pray stop and dine."

"You are very kind," said Edwin glancing about him as though attracted by the notion of a new and relishing sort of gipsy-party.

"Not at all," said Mr. Grewgious; "*you* are very kind to join issue with a bachelor in chambers, and take pot-luck. And I'll ask," said Mr. Grewgious, dropping his voice, and speaking with a twinkling eye, as if inspired with a bright thought; "I'll ask Bazzard. He mightn't like it else.—Bazzard!"

Bazzard reappeared.

"Dine presently with Mr. Drood and me."

"If I am ordered to dine, of course I will, sir," was the gloomy answer.

"Save the man!" cried Mr. Grewgious. "You're not ordered; you're invited."

"Thank you, sir," said Bazzard; "in that case I don't care if I do."

"That's arranged. And perhaps you wouldn't mind," said Mr. Grewgious, "stepping over to the hotel in Furnival's, and asking them to send in materials for laying the cloth. For dinner we'll have a tureen of the hottest and strongest soup available, and we'll have the best made dish that can be recommended, and we'll have a joint (such as a haunch of mutton), and we'll have a goose, or a turkey, or any little stuffed thing of that sort that may happen to be in the bill of fare—in short, we'll have whatever there is on hand."

These liberal directions Mr. Grewgious issued with his usual air of reading an inventory, or repeating a lesson, or doing anything else by rote. Bazzard, after drawing out the round table, withdrew to execute them.

"I was a little delicate, you see," said Mr. Grewgious, in a lower tone, after his clerk's departure, "about employing him in the foraging or commissariat department. Because he mightn't like it."

"He seems to have his own way, sir," remarked Edwin.

"His own way?" returned Mr. Grewgious. "O dear no! Poor fellow, you quite mistake him. If he had his own way, he wouldn't be here."

"I wonder where he would be!" Edwin thought. But he only thought it, because Mr. Grewgious came and stood himself with his back to the other corner of the fire, and his shoulder-blades against the chimneypiece, and collected his skirts for easy conversation.

"I take it without having the gift of prophecy, that you have done me the favour of looking in to mention that you are going down yonder—where I can tell you, you are expected—and to offer to execute any little commission from me to my charming ward, and perhaps to sharpen me up a bit in any proceedings? Eh, Mr. Edwin?"

"I called, sir, before going down, as an act of attention."

"Of attention!" said Mr. Grewgious. "Ah! of course, not of impatience?"

"Impatience, sir?"

Mr. Grewgious had meant to be arch—not that he in the remotest degree expressed that meaning—and had brought himself into scarcely supportable proximity with the fire, as if to burn the fullest effect of his archness into himself, as other subtle impressions are burnt into hard metals. But his archness suddenly flying before the composed face and manner of his visitor, and only the fire remaining, he started and rubbed himself.

"I have lately been down yonder," said Mr. Grewgious, rearranging his skirts; "and that was what I referred to, when I said I could tell you you are expected."

"Indeed, sir! Yes; I knew that Pussy was looking out for me."

"Do you keep a cat down there?" asked Mr. Grewgious.

Edwin coloured a little as he explained: "I call Rosa Pussy."

"O, really," said Mr. Grewgious, smoothing down his head; "that's very affable."

Edwin glanced at his face, uncertain whether or no he seriously objected to the appellation. But Edwin might as well have glanced at the face of a clock.

"A pet name, sir," he explained again.

"Umps," said Mr. Grewgious, with a nod. But with such an extraordinary compromise between an unqualified assent and a qualified dissent, that his visitor was much disconcerted.

"Did PRosa—" Edwin began by way of recovering himself.

"PRosa?" repeated Mr. Grewgious.

"I was going to say Pussy, and changed my mind;—did she tell you anything about the Landlesses?"

"No," said Mr. Grewgious. "What is the Landlesses? An estate? A villa? A farm?"

"A brother and sister. The sister is at the Nuns' House, and has become a great friend of P——"

"PRosa's," Mr. Grewgious struck in, with a fixed face.

"She is a strikingly handsome girl, sir, and I thought she might have been described to you, or presented to you perhaps?"

"Neither," said Mr. Grewgious. "But here is Bazzard."

Bazzard returned, accompanied by two waiters—an immovable waiter, and a flying waiter; and the three brought in with them as much fog as gave a new roar to the fire. The flying waiter, who had brought everything on his shoulders, laid the cloth with amazing rapidity and dexterity; while the immovable waiter, who had brought nothing, found fault with him. The flying waiter then highly polished all the glasses he had brought, and the immovable waiter looked through them. The flying waiter then flew across Holborn for the soup, and flew back again, and then took another flight for the made-dish, and flew back again, and then took another flight for the joint and poultry, and flew back again, and between whiles took supplementary flights for a great variety of articles, as it was discovered from time to time that the immovable waiter had forgotten them all. But let the flying waiter cleave the air as he might, he was always reproached on his return by the immovable waiter for bringing fog with him, and being out of breath. At the conclusion of the repast, by which time the flying waiter was severely blown, the immovable waiter gathered up the tablecloth under his arm with a grand air, and having sternly (not to say with indignation) looked on at the flying waiter while he set the clean glasses round, directed a valedictory glance towards Mr. Grewgious, conveying: "Let it be clearly understood between us that the reward is mine, and that Nil is the claim of this slave," and pushed the flying waiter before him out of the room.

It was like a highly-finished miniature painting representing My Lords of the Circumlocution Department, Commandership-in-Chief of any sort, Government. It was quite an edifying little picture to be hung on the line in the National Gallery.

As the fog had been the proximate cause of this sumptuous repast, so the fog served for its general sauce. To hear the out-door clerks sneezing, wheezing, and beating their feet on the gravel was a zest far surpassing Doctor Kitchener's. To bid, with a shiver, the unfortunate flying waiter shut the door before he had opened it, was a condiment of a profounder flavour than Harvey. And here let it be noticed, parenthetically, that the leg of this young man, in its application to the door, evinced the finest sense of touch; always preceding himself and tray (with something of an angling air about it), by some seconds: and always lingering after he and the tray had disappeared, like Macbeth's leg when accompanying him off the stage with reluctance to the assassination of Duncan.

The host had gone below to the cellar, and had brought up bottles of ruby, straw-coloured, and golden drinks, which had ripened long ago in lands where no fogs are, and had since lain slumbering in the shade. Sparkling and tingling after so long a nap, they pushed at their corks to help the corkscrew (like prisoners helping rioters to force their gates), and danced out gaily. If P. J. T. in seventeen-forty-seven, or in any other year of his period, drank such wines—then, for a certainty, P. J. T. was Pretty Jolly Too.

Externally, Mr. Grewgious showed no signs of being mellowed by these glowing vintages. Instead of his drinking them, they might have been poured over him in his high-dried snuff form, and run to waste, for any lights and shades they caused to flicker over his face. Neither was his manner influenced. But, in his wooden way, he had observant eyes for Edwin; and when at the end of dinner, he motioned Edwin back to his own easy-chair in the fireside corner, and Edwin sank luxuriously into it after very brief remonstrance, Mr. Grewgious, as he turned his seat round towards the fire too, and smoothed his head and face, might have been seen looking at his visitor between his smoothing fingers.

"Bazzard!" said Mr. Grewgious, suddenly turning to him.

"I follow you, sir," returned Bazzard; who had done his work of consuming meat and drink in a workmanlike manner, though mostly in speechlessness.

"I drink to you, Bazzard; Mr. Edwin, success to Mr. Bazzard!"

"Success to Mr. Bazzard!" echoed Edwin, with a totally unfounded appearance of enthusiasm, and with the unspoken addition: "What in, I wonder!"

"And May!" pursued Mr. Grewgious—"I am not at liberty to be definite—May!—my conversational powers are so very limited that I know I shall not come well out of this—May!—it ought to be put imaginatively, but I have no imagination—May!—the thorn of anxiety is as nearly the mark as I am likely to get—May it come out at last!"

Mr. Bazzard, with a frowning smile at the fire, put a hand into his tangled locks, as if the thorn of anxiety were there; then into his waistcoat, as if it were there; then into his pockets, as if it were there. In all these movements he was closely followed by the eyes of Edwin, as if that young gentleman expected to see the thorn in action. It was not produced, however, and Mr. Bazzard merely said: "I follow you, sir, and I thank you."

"I am going," said Mr. Grewgious, jingling his glass on the table with one hand, and bending aside under cover of the other, to whisper to Edwin, "to drink to my ward. But I put Bazzard first. He mightn't like it else."

This was said with a mysterious wink; or what would have been a wink, if, in Mr. Grewgious's hands, it could have been quick enough. So Edwin winked responsively, without the least idea what he meant by doing so.

"And now," said Mr. Grewgious, "I devote a bumper to the fair and fascinating Miss Rosa. Bazzard, the fair and fascinating Miss Rosa!"

"I follow you, sir," said Bazzard, "and I pledge you!"

"And so do I!" said Edwin.

"Lord bless me," cried Mr. Grewgious, breaking the blank silence which of course ensued: though why these pauses *should* come upon us when we have performed any small social rite, not directly inducive of self-examination or mental despondency, who can tell? "I am a particularly Angular man, and yet I fancy (if I may use the word, not having a morsel of fancy), that I could draw a picture of a true lover's state of mind, to-night."

"Let us follow you, sir," said Bazzard, "and have the picture."

"Mr. Edwin will correct it where it's wrong," resumed Mr. Grewgious, "and will throw in a few touches from the life. I dare say it is wrong in many particulars, and wants many touches from the life, for I was born a Chip, and have neither soft sympathies nor soft experiences. Well! I hazard the guess that the true lover's mind is completely permeated by the beloved object of his affections. I hazard the guess that her dear name is precious to him, cannot be heard or repeated without emotion, and is preserved sacred. If he has any distinguishing appellation of fondness for her, it is reserved for her, and is not for common ears. A name that it would be a privilege to call her by, being alone with her own bright self, it would be a liberty, a coldness, an insensibility, almost a breach of good faith, to flaunt elsewhere."

It was wonderful to see Mr. Grewgious sitting bolt upright, with his hands on his knees, continuously chopping this discourse out of himself; much as a charity boy with a very good memory might get his catechism said: and evincing no correspondent emotion whatever, unless in a certain occasional little tingling perceptible at the end of his nose.

"My picture," Mr. Grewgious proceeded, "goes on to represent (under correction from you, Mr. Edwin), the true lover as ever impatient to be in the presence or vicinity of the beloved object of his affections; as caring very little for his ease in any other society; and as constantly seeking that. If I was to say seeking that, as a bird seeks its nest, I should make an ass of myself, because that would trench upon what I understand to be poetry; and I am so far from trenching upon poetry at any time, that I never, to my knowledge, got within ten thousand miles of it. And I am besides totally unacquainted with the habits of birds, except the birds of Staple Inn, who seek their nests on ledges, and in gutterpipes and chimneypots, not constructed for them by the beneficent hand of Nature. I beg, therefore, to be understood as foregoing the bird's-nest. But my picture does represent the true lover as having no existence separable from that of the beloved object of his affections, and as living at once a doubled life and a halved life. And if I do not clearly express what I mean by that, it is either for the reason that having no conversational powers, I cannot express what I mean, or that having no meaning, I do not mean what I fail to express. Which, to the best of my belief, is not the case."

Edwin had turned red and turned white, as certain points of this picture came into the light. He now sat looking at the fire, and bit his lip.

"The speculations of an Angular man," resumed Mr. Grewgious, still sitting and speaking exactly as before, "are probably erroneous on so globular a topic. But I figure to myself (subject, as before, to Mr. Edwin's correction), that there can be no coolness, no lassitude, no doubt, no indifference, no half fire and half smoke state of mind, in a real lover. Pray am I at all near the mark in my picture?"

As abrupt in his conclusion as in his commencement and progress, he jerked this inquiry at Edwin, and stopped when one might have supposed him in the middle of his oration.

"I should say, sir," stammered Edwin, "as you refer the question to me——"

"Yes," said Mr. Grewgious, "I refer it to you, as an authority."

"I should say, then, sir," Edwin went on, embarrassed, "that the picture you have drawn is generally correct; but I submit that perhaps you may be rather hard upon the unlucky lover."

"Likely so," assented Mr. Grewgious, "likely so. I am a hard man in the grain."

"He may not show," said Edwin, "all he feels; or he may not——"

There he stopped so long, to find the rest of his sentence, that Mr. Grewgious rendered his difficulty a thousand times the greater by unexpectedly striking in with:

"No, to be sure; he *may* not!"

After that, they all sat silent; the silence of Mr. Bazzard being occasioned by slumber.

"His responsibility is very great, though," said Mr. Grewgious at length, with his eyes on the fire.

Edwin nodded assent, with *his* eyes on the fire.

"And let him be sure that he trifles with no one," said Mr. Grewgious; "neither with himself, nor with any other."

Edwin bit his lip again, and still sat looking at the fire.

"He must not make a plaything of a treasure. Woe betide him if he does! Let him take that well to heart," said Mr. Grewgious.

Though he said these things in short sentences, much as the supposititious charity boy just now referred to might have repeated a verse or two from the Book of Proverbs, there was something dreamy (for so literal a man) in the way in which he now shook his right forefinger at the live coals in the grate, and again fell silent.

But not for long. As he sat upright and stiff in his chair, he suddenly rapped his knees, like the carved image of some queer Joss or other coming out of its reverie, and said: "We must finish this bottle, Mr. Edwin. Let me help you. I'll help Bazzard too, though he *is* asleep. He mightn't like it else."

He helped them both, and helped himself, and drained his glass, and stood it bottom upward on the table, as though he had just caught a bluebottle in it.

"And now, Mr. Edwin," he proceeded, wiping his mouth and hands upon his handkerchief: "to a little piece of business. You received from me, the other day, a certified copy of Miss Rosa's father's will. You knew its contents before, but you received it from me as a matter of business. I should have sent it to Mr. Jasper, but for Miss Rosa's wishing it to come straight to you, in preference. You received it?"

"Quite safely, sir."

"You should have acknowledged its receipt," said Mr. Grewgious; "business being business all the world over. However, you did not."

"I meant to have acknowledged it when I first came in this evening, sir."

"Not a business-like acknowledgment," returned Mr. Grewgious; "however, let that pass. Now, in that document you have observed a few words of kindly allusion to its being left to me to discharge a little trust, confided to me in conversation, at such time as I in my discretion may think best."

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Edwin, it came into my mind just now, when I was looking at the fire, that I could, in my discretion, acquit myself of that trust at no better time than the present. Favour me with your attention, half a minute."

He took a bunch of keys from his pocket, singled out by the candlelight the key he wanted, and then, with a candle in his hand, went to a bureau or escritoire, unlocked it, touched the spring of a little secret drawer, and took from it an ordinary ring-case made for a single ring. With this in his hand, he returned to his chair. As he held it up for the young man to see, his hand trembled.

"Mr. Edwin, this rose of diamonds and rubies delicately set in gold, was a ring belonging to Miss Rosa's mother. It was removed from her dead hand, in my presence, with such distracted grief as I hope it may never be my lot to contemplate again. Hard man as I am, I am not hard enough for that. See how bright these stones shine!" opening the case. "And yet the eyes that were so much brighter, and that so often looked upon them with a light and a proud heart, have been ashes among ashes, and dust among dust, some years! If I had any imagination (which it is needless to say I have not), I might imagine that the lasting beauty of these stones was almost cruel."

He closed the case again as he spoke.

"This ring was given to the young lady who was drowned so early in her beautiful and happy career, by her husband, when they first plighted their faith to one another. It was he who removed it from her unconscious hand, and it was he who, when his death drew very near, placed it in mine. The trust in which I received it, was, that, you and Miss Rosa growing to manhood and womanhood, and your betrothal prospering and coming to maturity, I should give it to you to place upon her finger. Failing those desired results, it was to remain in my possession."

Some trouble was in the young man's face, and some indecision was in the action of his hand, as Mr. Grewgious, looking steadfastly at him, gave him the ring.

"Your placing it on her finger," said Mr. Grewgious, "will be the solemn seal upon your strict fidelity to the living and the dead. You are going to her, to make the last irrevocable preparations for your marriage. Take it with you."

The young man took the little case, and placed it in his breast.

"If anything should be amiss, if anything should be even slightly wrong, between you; if you should have any secret consciousness that you are committing yourself to this step for no higher reason than because you have long been accustomed to look forward to it; then," said Mr. Grewgious, "I charge you once more, by the living and by the dead, to bring that ring back to me!"

Here Bazzard awoke himself by his own snoring; and, as is usual in such cases, sat apoplectically staring at vacancy, as defying vacancy to accuse him of having been asleep.

"Bazzard!" said Mr. Grewgious, harder than ever.

"I follow you, sir," said Bazzard, "and I have been following you."

"In discharge of a trust, I have handed Mr. Edwin Drood a ring of diamonds and rubies. You see?"

Edwin reproduced the little case, and opened it; and Bazzard looked into it.

"I follow you both, sir," returned Bazzard, "and I witness the transaction."

Evidently anxious to get away and be alone, Edwin Drood now resumed his outer clothing, muttered something about time and appointments. The fog was reported no clearer (by the flying waiter, who alighted from a speculative flight in the coffee interest), but he went out into it; and Bazzard, after his manner, "followed" him.

Mr. Grewgious, left alone, walked softly and slowly to and fro, for an hour and more. He was restless to-night, and seemed dispirited.

"I hope I have done right," he said. "The appeal to him seemed necessary. It was hard to lose the ring, and yet it must have gone from me very soon."

He closed the empty little drawer with a sigh, and shut and locked the escritoire, and came back to the solitary fireside.

"Her ring," he went on. "Will it come back to me? My mind hangs about her ring very uneasily to-night. But that is explainable. I have had it so long, and I have prized it so much! I wonder——"

He was in a wondering mood as well as a restless; for, though he checked himself at that point, and took another walk, he resumed his wondering when he sat down again.

"I wonder (for the ten-thousandth time, and what a weak fool I, for what can it signify now!) whether he confided the charge of their orphan child to me, because he knew—Good God, how like her mother she has become!

"I wonder whether he ever so much as suspected that some one doted on her, at a hopeless, speechless distance, when he struck in and won her. I wonder whether it ever crept into his mind who that unfortunate some one was!

"I wonder whether I shall sleep to-night! At all events, I will shut out the world with the bedclothes, and try."

Mr. Grewgious crossed the staircase to his raw and foggy bedroom, and was soon ready for bed. Dimly catching sight of his face in the misty looking-glass, he held his candle to it for a moment.

"A likely some one, *you*, to come into anybody's thoughts in such an aspect!" he exclaimed. "There! there! there! Get to bed, poor man, and cease to jabber!"

With that, he extinguished his light, pulled up the bedclothes around him, and with another sigh shut out the world. And yet there are such unexplored romantic nooks in the unlikeliest men, that even old tinderous and touchwoody P. J. T. Possibly Jabbered Thus, at some odd times, in or about seventeen-forty-seven.

CHAPTER XII

A NIGHT WITH DURDLES

When Mr. Sapsea has nothing better to do, towards evening, and finds the contemplation of his own profundity becoming a little monotonous in spite of the vastness of the subject, he often takes an airing in the Cathedral Close and thereabout. He likes to pass the churchyard with a swelling air of proprietorship, and to encourage in his breast a sort of benignant-landlord feeling, in that he has been bountiful towards that meritorious tenant, Mrs. Sapsea, and has publicly given her a prize. He likes to see a stray face or two looking in through the railings, and perhaps reading his inscription. Should he meet a stranger coming from the churchyard with a quick step, he is morally convinced that the stranger is "with a blush retiring," as monumentally directed.

Mr. Sapsea's importance has received enhancement, for he has become Mayor of Cloisterham. Without mayors, and many of them, it cannot be disputed that the whole framework of society—Mr. Sapsea is confident that he invented that forcible figure—would fall to pieces. Mayors have been knighted for "going up" with addresses: explosive machines intrepidly discharging shot and shell into the English Grammar. Mr. Sapsea may "go up" with an address. Rise, Sir Thomas Sapsea! Of such is the salt of the earth.

Mr. Sapsea has improved the acquaintance of Mr. Jasper, since their first meeting to partake of port, epitaph, backgammon, beef, and salad. Mr. Sapsea has been received at the gatehouse with kindred hospitality; and on that occasion Mr. Jasper seated himself at the piano, and sang to him, tickling his ear—figuratively—long enough to present a considerable area for tickling. What Mr. Sapsea likes in that young man is, that he is always ready to profit by the wisdom of his elders, and that he is sound, sir, at the core. In proof of which, he sang to Mr. Sapsea that evening, no kickshaw ditties, favourites with national enemies, but gave him the genuine George the Third home-brewed; exhorting him (as "my brave boys") to reduce to a smashed condition all other islands but this island, and all continents, peninsulas, isthmuses, promontories, and other geographical forms of land soever, besides sweeping the seas in all directions.' In short, he rendered it pretty clear that Providence made a distinct mistake in originating so small a nation of hearts of oak, and so many other verminous peoples.

Mr. Sapsea, walking slowly this moist evening near the churchyard with his hands behind him, on the look-out for a blushing and retiring stranger, turns a corner, and comes instead into the goodly presence of the Dean, conversing with the Verger and Mr. Jasper. Mr. Sapsea makes his obeisance, and is instantly stricken far more ecclesiastical than any Archbishop of York or Canterbury.

"You are evidently going to write a book about us, Mr. Jasper," quoth the Dean; "to write a book about us. Well! We are very ancient, and we ought to make a good book. We are not so richly endowed in possessions as in age; but perhaps you will put *that* in your book, among other things, and call attention to our wrongs."

Mr. Tope, as in duty bound, is greatly entertained by this.

"I really have no intention at all, sir," replies Jasper, "of turning author or archæologist. It is but a whim of mine. And even for my whim, Mr. Sapsea here is more accountable than I am."

"How so, Mr. Mayor?" says the Dean, with a nod of good-natured recognition of his Fetch. "How is that, Mr. Mayor?"

"I am not aware," Mr. Sapsea remarks, looking about him for information, "to what the Very Reverend the Dean does me the honour of referring." And then falls to studying his original in minute points of detail.

"Durdles," Mr. Tope hints.

"Ay!" the Dean echoes; "Durdles, Durdles!"

"The truth is, sir," explains Jasper, "that my curiosity in the man was first really stimulated by Mr. Sapsea. Mr. Sapsea's knowledge of mankind and power of drawing out whatever is recluse or odd around him, first led to my bestowing a second thought upon the man: though of course I had met him constantly about. You would not be surprised by this, Mr. Dean, if you had seen Mr. Sapsea deal with him in his own parlour, as I did."

"O!" cries Sapsea, picking up the ball thrown to him with ineffable complacency and pomposity; "yes, yes. The Very Reverend the Dean refers to that? Yes. I happened to bring Durdles and Mr. Jasper together. I regard Durdles as a Character."

"A Character, Mr. Sapsea, that with a few skilful touches you turn inside out," says Jasper.

"Nay, not quite that," returns the lumbering auctioneer. "I may have a little influence over him, perhaps; and a little insight into his character, perhaps. The Very Reverend the Dean will please to bear in mind that I have seen the world." Here Mr. Sapsea gets a little behind the Dean, to inspect his coat-buttons.

"Well!" says the Dean, looking about him to see what has become of his copyist: "I hope, Mr. Mayor, you will use your study and knowledge of Durdles to the good purpose of exhorting him not to break our worthy and respected Choir-Master's neck; we cannot afford it; his head and voice are much too valuable to us."

Mr. Tope is again highly entertained, and, having fallen into respectful convulsions of laughter, subsides into a deferential murmur, importing that surely any gentleman would deem it a pleasure and an honour to have his neck broken, in return for such a compliment from such a source.

"I will take it upon myself, sir," observes Sapsea loftily, "to answer for Mr. Jasper's neck. I will tell Durdles to be careful of it. He will mind what *I* say. How is it at present endangered?" he inquires, looking about him with magnificent patronage.

"Only by my making a moonlight expedition with Durdles among the tombs, vaults, towers, and ruins," returns Jasper. "You remember suggesting when you brought us together, that, as a lover of the picturesque, it might be worth my while?"

"*I* remember!" replies the auctioneer. And the solemn idiot really believes that he does remember.

"Profiting by your hint," pursues Jasper, "I have had some day-rambles with the extraordinary old fellow, and we are to make a moonlight hole-and-corner exploration to-night."

"And here he is," says the Dean.

Durdles, with his dinner-bundle in his hand, is indeed beheld slouching towards them. Slouching nearer, and perceiving the Dean, he pulls off his hat, and is slouching away with it under his arm, when Mr. Sapsea stops him.

"Mind you take care of my friend," is the injunction Mr. Sapsea lays upon him.

"What friend o' yourn is dead?" asks Durdles. "No orders has come in for any friend o' yourn."

"I mean my live friend there."

"O! him?" says Durdles. "He can take care of himself, can Mister Jarsper."

"But do you take care of him too," says Sapsea.

Whom Durdles (there being command in his tone) surlily surveys from head to foot.

"With submission to his Reverence the Dean, if you'll mind what concerns you, Mr. Sapsea, Durdles he'll mind what concerns him."

"You're out of temper," says Mr. Sapsea, winking to the company to observe how smoothly he will manage him. "My friend concerns me, and Mr. Jasper is my friend. And you are my friend."

"Don't you get into a bad habit of boasting," retorts Durdles, with a grave cautionary nod. "It'll grow upon you."

"You are out of temper," says Sapsea again; reddening, but again winking to the company.

"I own to it," returns Durdles; "I don't like liberties."

Mr. Sapsea winks a third wink to the company, as who should say: "I think you will agree with me that I have settled *his* business;" and stalks out of the controversy.

Durdles then gives the Dean a good evening, and adding, as he puts his hat on, "You'll find me at home, Mister Jarsper, as agreed, when you want me; I'm a-going home to clean myself," soon slouches out of sight. This going home to clean himself is one of the man's incomprehensible compromises with inexorable facts; he, and his hat, and his boots, and his clothes, never showing any trace of cleaning, but being uniformly in one condition of dust and grit.

The lamplighter now dotting the quiet Close with specks of light, and running at a great rate up and down his little ladder with that object—his little ladder under the sacred shadow of whose inconvenience generations had grown up, and which all Cloisterham would have stood aghast at the idea of abolishing—the Dean withdraws to his dinner, Mr. Tope to his tea, and Mr. Jasper to his piano. There, with no light but that of the fire, he sits chanting choir-music in a low and beautiful voice, for two or three hours; in short, until it has been for some time dark, and the moon is about to rise.

Then he closes his piano softly, softly changes his coat for a pea-jacket, with a goodly wicker-cased bottle in its largest pocket, and putting on a low-crowned flap-brimmed hat, goes softly out. Why does he move so softly to-night? No outward reason is apparent for it. Can there be any sympathetic reason crouching darkly within him?

Repairing to Durdle's unfinished house, or hole in the city wall, and seeing a light within it, he softly picks his course among the gravestones, monuments, and stony lumber of the yard, already touched here and there, sidewise, by the rising moon. The two journeymen have left their two great saws sticking in their blocks of stone; and two skeleton journeymen out of the Dance of Death might be grinning in the shadow of their sheltering sentry-boxes, about to slash away at cutting out the gravestones of the next two people destined to die in Cloisterham. Likely enough, the two think little of that now, being alive, and perhaps merry. Curious, to make a guess at the two;—or say one of the two!

"Ho! Durdles!"

The light moves, and he appears with it at the door. He would seem to have been "cleaning himself" with the aid of a bottle, jug, and tumbler; for no other cleansing instruments are visible in the bare brick room with rafters overhead and no plastered ceiling, into which he shows his visitor.

"Are you ready?"

"I am ready, Mister Jarsper. Let the old uns come out if they dare, when we go among their tombs. My spirit is ready for 'em."

"Do you mean animal spirits, or ardent?"

"The one's the t'other," answers Durdles, "and I mean 'em both."

He takes a lantern from a hook, puts a match or two in his pocket wherewith to light it, should there be need; and they go out together, dinner-bundle and all.

Surely an unaccountable sort of expedition! That Durdles himself, who is always prowling among old graves, and ruins, like a Ghoule—that he should be stealing forth to climb, and dive, and wander without an object, is nothing extraordinary; but that the Choir-Master or any one else should hold it worth his while to be with him, and to study moonlight effects in such company is another affair. Surely an unaccountable sort of expedition, therefore!

"'Ware that there mound by the yard-gate, Mister Jarsper."

"I see it. What is it?"

"Lime."

Mr. Jasper stops, and waits for him to come up, for he lags behind.

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Durdles cautions Mr. Sapsea against Boasting.

"What you call quick-lime?"

"Ay!" says Durdles; "quick enough to eat your boots. With a little handy stirring, quick enough to eat your bones."

They go on, presently passing the red windows of the Travellers' Twopenny, and emerging into the clear moonlight of the Monks' Vineyard. This crossed, they come to Minor Canon Corner: of which the greater part lies in shadow until the moon shall rise higher in the sky.

The sound of a closing house-door strikes their ears, and two men come out. These are Mr. Crisparkle and Neville. Jasper, with a strange and sudden smile upon his face, lays the palm of his hand upon the breast of Durdles, stopping him where he stands.

At that end of Minor Canon Corner the shadow is profound in the existing state of the light: at that end, too, there is a piece of old dwarf wall, breast high, the only remaining boundary of what was once a garden, but is now the thoroughfare. Jasper and Durdles would have turned this wall in another instant; but, stopping so short, stand behind it.

"Those two are only sauntering," Jasper whispers; "they will go out into the moonlight soon. Let us keep quiet here, or they will detain us, or want to join us, or what not."

Durdles nods assent, and falls to munching some fragments from his bundle. Jasper folds his arms upon the top of the wall, and, with his chin resting on them, watches. He takes no note whatever of the Minor Canon, but watches Neville, as though his eye were at the trigger of a loaded rifle, and he had covered him, and were going to fire. A sense of destructive power is so expressed in his face, that even Durdles pauses in his munching, and looks at him, with an unmunched something in his cheek.

Meanwhile Mr. Crisparkle and Neville walk to and fro, quietly talking together. What they say, cannot be heard consecutively; but Mr. Jasper has already distinguished his own name more than once.

"This is the first day of the week," Mr. Crisparkle can be distinctly heard to observe, as they turn back; "and the last day of the week is Christmas Eve."

"You may be certain of me, sir."

The echoes were favourable at those points, but as the two approach, the sound of their talking becomes confused again. The word "confidence," shattered by the echoes, but still capable of being pieced together, is uttered by Mr. Crisparkle. As they draw still nearer, this fragment of a reply is heard: "Not deserved yet, but shall be, sir." As they turn away again, Jasper again hears his own name, in connection with the words from Mr. Crisparkle: "Remember that I said I answered for you confidently." Then the sound of their talk becomes confused again; they halting for a little while, and some earnest action on the part of Neville succeeding. When they move once more, Mr. Crisparkle is seen to look up at the sky, and to point before him. They then slowly disappear; passing out into the moonlight at the opposite end of the Corner.

It is not until they are gone that Mr. Jasper moves. But then he turns to Durdles, and bursts into a fit of laughter. Durdles, who still has that suspended something in his cheek, and who sees nothing to laugh at, stares at him until Mr. Jasper lays his face down on his arms to have his laugh out. Then Durdles bolts the something, as if desperately resigning himself to indigestion.

Among those secluded nooks there is very little stir or movement after dark. There is little enough in the high tide of the day, but there is next to none at night. Besides that the cheerfully frequented High Street lies nearly parallel to the spot (the old Cathedral rising between the two), and is the natural channel in which the Cloisterham traffic flows, a certain awful hush pervades the ancient pile, the cloisters, and the churchyard, after dark, which not many people care to encounter. Ask the first hundred citizens of Cloisterham, met at random in the streets at noon, if they believed in Ghosts, they would tell you no; but put them to choose at night between these eerie Precincts and the thoroughfare of shops, and you would find that ninety-nine declared for the longer round and the more frequented way. The cause of this is not to be found in any local superstition that attaches to the Precincts—albeit a mysterious lady, with a child in her arms and a rope dangling from her neck, has been seen flitting about there by sundry witnesses as intangible as herself—but it is to be sought in the innate shrinking of dust with the breath of life in it from dust out of which the breath of life has passed; also, in the widely diffused, and almost as widely unacknowledged, reflection: "If the dead do, under any circumstances, become visible to the living, these are such likely surroundings for the purpose that I, the living, will get out of them as soon as I can."

Hence, when Mr. Jasper and Durdles pause to glance around them, before descending into the crypt by a small side door, of which the latter has a key, the whole expanse of moonlight in their view is utterly deserted. One might fancy that the tide of life was stemmed by Mr. Jasper's own gatehouse. The murmur of the tide is heard beyond; but no wave passes the archway, over which his lamp burns red behind this curtain, as if the building were a Lighthouse.

They enter, locking themselves in, descend the rugged step, and are down in the Crypt. The lantern is not wanted, for the moonlight strikes in at the groined windows, bare of glass, the broken frames for which cast patterns on the ground. The heavy pillars which support the roof engender masses of black shade, but between them there are lanes of light. Up and down these lanes they walk, Durdles discoursing of the "old uns" he yet counts on disinterring, and slapping a wall, in which he considers "a whole family on 'em" to be stoned and earthed up, just as if he were a familiar friend of the family. The taciturnity of Durdles is for the time overcome by Mr. Jasper's wicker bottle, which circulates freely;—in the sense, that is to say, that its contents enter freely into Mr. Durdles's circulation, while Mr. Jasper only rinses his mouth once, and casts forth the rinsing.

They are to ascend the great Tower. On the steps by which they rise to the Cathedral, Durdles pauses for new store of breath. The steps are very dark, but out of the darkness they can see the lanes of light they have traversed. Durdles seats himself upon a step. Mr. Jasper seats himself upon another. The odour from the wicker bottle (which has somehow passed into Durdles's keeping) soon intimates that the cork has been taken out; but this is not ascertainable through the sense of sight, since neither can descry the other. And yet, in talking, they turn to one another, as though their faces could commune together.

"This is good stuff, Mister Jarsper!"

"It is very good stuff, I hope. I bought it on purpose."

"They don't show, you see, the old uns don't, Mister Jarsper!"

"It would be a more confused world than it is, if they could."

"Well, it *would* lead towards a mixing of things," Durdles acquiesces: pausing on the remark, as if the idea of ghosts had not previously presented itself to him in a merely inconvenient light, domestically or chronologically. "But do you think there may be Ghosts of other things, though not of men and women?"

"What things? Flower-beds and watering-pots? horses and harness?"

"No. Sounds."

"What sounds?"

"Cries."

"What cries do you mean? Chairs to mend?"

"No. I mean screeches. Now I'll tell you, Mr. Jarsper. Wait a bit till I put the bottle right." Here the cork is evidently taken out again, and replaced again. "There! *Now* it's right! This time last year, only a few days later, I happened to have been doing what was correct by the season, in the way of giving it the welcome it had a right to expect, when them town-boys set on me at their worst. At length I gave 'em the slip, and turned in here. And here I fell asleep. And what woke me? The ghost of a cry. The ghost of one terrific shriek, which shriek was followed by the ghost of the howl of a dog: a long dismal woeful howl, such as a dog gives when a person's dead. That was *my* last Christmas Eve."

"What do you mean?" is the very abrupt, and, one might say, fierce retort.

"I mean that I made inquiries everywhere about, and that no living ears but mine heard that cry or that howl. So I say they was both ghosts; though why they came to me, I've never made out."

"I thought you were another kind of man," says Jasper scornfully.

"So I thought myself," answered Durdles with his usual composure; "and yet I was picked out for it."

Jasper had risen suddenly, when he asked him what he meant, and he now says, "Come; we shall freeze here; lead the way."

Durdles complies, not over-steadily; opens the door at the top of the steps with the key he has already used; and so emerges on the Cathedral level, in a passage at the side of the chancel. Here, the moonlight is so very bright again that the colours of the nearest stained-glass window are thrown upon their faces. The appearance of the unconscious Durdles, holding the door open for his companion to follow, as if from the grave, is ghastly enough, with a purple band across his face, and a yellow splash upon his brow; but he bears the close scrutiny of his companion in an insensible way, although it is prolonged while the latter fumbles among his pockets for a key confided to him that will open an iron gate, so to enable them to pass to the staircase of the great tower.

"That and the bottle are enough for you to carry," he says, giving it to Durdles; "hand your bundle to me; I am younger and longer-winded than you." Durdles hesitates for a moment between bundle and bottle; but gives the preference to the bottle as being by far the better company, and consigns the dry weight to his fellow-explorer.

Then they go up the winding staircase of the great tower, toilsomely, turning and turning, and lowering their heads to avoid the stairs above, or the rough stone pivot around which they twist. Durdles has lighted his lantern, by drawing from the cold hard wall a spark of that mysterious fire which lurks in everything, and, guided by this speck, they clamber up among the cobwebs and the dust. Their way lies through strange places. Twice or thrice they emerge into level low-arched galleries, whence they can look down into the moonlit nave; and where Durdles, waving his lantern, waves the dim angels' heads upon the corbels of the roof, seeming to watch their progress. Anon they turn into narrower and steeper staircases, and the night-air begins to blow upon them, and the chirp of some startled jackdaw or frightened rook precedes the heavy beating of wings in a confined space, and the beating down of dust and straws upon their heads. At last, leaving their light behind a stair—for it blows fresh up here—they look down on Cloisterham, fair to see in the moonlight: its ruined habitations and sanctuaries of the dead, at the tower's base: its moss-softened red-tiled roofs and red-brick houses of the living, clustered beyond: its river winding down from the mist on the horizon, as though that were its source, and already heaving with a restless knowledge of its approach towards the sea.

Once again, an unaccountable expedition this! Jasper (always moving softly with no visible reason) contemplates the scene, and especially that stillest part of it which the Cathedral overshadows. But he contemplates Durdles quite as curiously, and Durdles is by times conscious of his watchful eyes.

Only by times, because Durdles is growing drowsy. As aëronauts lighten the load they carry, when they wish to rise, similarly Durdles has lightened the wicker bottle in coming up. Snatches of sleep surprise him on his legs, and stop him in his talk. A mild fit of calenture seizes him, in which he deems that the ground so far below, is on a level with the tower, and would as lief walk off the tower into the air as not. Such is his state when they begin to come down. And as aëronauts make themselves heavier when they wish to descend, similarly Durdles charges himself with more liquid from the wicker bottle, that he may come down the better.

The iron gate attained and locked—but not before Durdles has stumbled twice, and cut an eyebrow open once—they descend into the crypt again, with the intent of issuing forth as they entered. But, while returning among those lanes of light, Durdles becomes so very uncertain, both of foot and speech, that he half drops, half throws himself down, by one of the heavy pillars, scarcely less heavy than itself, and indistinctly appeals to his companion for forty winks of a second each.

"If you will have it so, or must have it so," replies Jasper, "I'll not leave you here. Take them while I walk to and fro."

Durdles is asleep at once; and in his sleep he dreams a dream.

It is not much of a dream, considering the vast extent of the domains of dreamland and their wonderful productions; it is only remarkable for being unusually restless and unusually real. He dreams of lying there, asleep, and yet counting his companion's footsteps as he walks to and fro. He dreams that the footsteps die away into distance of time and of space, and that something touches him, and that something falls from his hand. Then something clinks and gropes about, and he dreams that he is alone for so long a time, that the lanes of light take new directions as the moon advances in her course. From succeeding unconsciousness he passes into a dream of slow uneasiness from cold; and painfully awakes to a perception of the lanes of light—really changed, much as he had dreamed—and Jasper walking among them, beating his hands and feet.

"Hulloa!" Durdles cries out, unmeaningly alarmed.

"Awake at last?" says Jasper, coming up to him. "Do you know that your forties have stretched into thousands?"

"No."

"They have though."

"What's the time?"

"Hark! The bells are going in the Tower!"

They strike four quarters, and then the great bell strikes.

"Two!" cries Durdles, scrambling up; "why didn't you try to wake me, Mister Jarsper?"

"I did. I might as well have tried to wake the dead—your own family of dead, up in the corner there."

"Did you touch me?"

"Touch you! Yes. Shook you."

As Durdles recalls that touching something in his dream, he looks down on the pavement, and sees the key of the crypt door lying close to where he himself lay.

"I dropped you, did I?" he says, picking it up, and recalling that part of his dream. As he gathers himself up again into an upright position, or into a position as nearly upright as he ever maintains, he is again conscious of being watched by his companion.

"Well?" says Jasper, smiling, "are you quite ready? Pray don't hurry."

"Let me get my bundle right, Mister Jarsper, and I'm with you."

As he ties it afresh, he is once more conscious that he is very narrowly observed.

"What do you suspect me of, Mister Jarsper?" he asks, with drunken displeasure. "Let them as has any suspicions of Durdles name 'em."

"I've no suspicions of you, my good Mr. Durdles; but I have suspicions that my bottle was filled with something stiffer than either of us supposed. And I also have suspicions," Jasper adds, taking it from the pavement and turning it bottom upwards, "that it's empty."

Durdles condescends to laugh at this. Continuing to chuckle when his laugh is over, as though remonstrant with himself on his drinking powers, he rolls to the door and unlocks it. They both pass out, and Durdles relocks it, and pockets the key.

"A thousand thanks for a curious and interesting night," says Jasper, giving him his hand; "you can make your own way home?"

"I should think so!" answered Durdles. "If you was to offer Durdles the affront to show him the way home, he wouldn't go home.

Durdles wouldn't go home till morning;
And *then* Durdles wouldn't go home,

Durdles wouldn't." This with the utmost defiance.

"Good-night, then."

"Good-night, Mister Jarsper."

Each is turning his own way, when a sharp whistle rends the silence, and the jargon is yelped out:

"Widdy widdy wen!
I—ket—ches—Im—out—ar—ter—ten.
Widdy widdy wy!
Then—E—don't—go—then—I—shy—
Widdy Widdy Wake-cock warning!"

Instantly afterwards, a rapid fire of stones rattles at the Cathedral wall, and the hideous small boy is beheld opposite, dancing in the moonlight.

"What! Is that baby-devil on the watch there!" cries Jasper in a fury: so quickly roused, and so violent, that he seems an older devil himself. "I will shed the blood of that impish wretch! I know I shall do it!" Regardless of the fire, though it hits him more than once, he rushes at Deputy, collars him, and tries to bring him across. But Deputy is not to be so early brought across. With a diabolical insight into the strongest part of his position, he is no sooner taken by the throat than he curls up his legs, forces his assailant to hang him, as it were, and gurgles in his throat, and screws his body, and twists, as already undergoing the first agonies of strangulation. There is nothing for it but to drop him. He instantly gets himself together, backs over to Durdles, and cries to his assailant, gnashing the great gap in front of his mouth with rage and malice:

"I'll blind yer, s'elp me! I'll stone yer eyes out, s'elp me! If I don't have yer eyesight, bellows me!" At the same time dodging behind

Durdles, and snarling at Jasper, now from this side of him, and now from that: prepared, if pounced upon, to dart away in all manner of curvilinear directions, and, if run down after all, to grovel in the dust, and cry: "Now, hit me when I'm down! Do it!"

"Don't hurt the boy, Mister Jarsper," urges Durdles, shielding him. "Recollect yourself."

"He followed us to-night, when we first came here!"

"Yer lie, I didn't," replies Deputy, in his one form of polite contradiction.

"He has been prowling near us ever since!"

"Yer lie, I haven't," returns Deputy. "I'd only jist come out for my 'elth when I see you two a-coming out of the Kinfreederel. If

I—ket—ches—Im—out—ar—ter—ten!"

(with the usual rhythm and dance, though dodging behind Durdles), "it ain't *my* fault, is it?"

"Take him home, then," retorts Jasper, ferociously, though with a strong check upon himself, "and let my eyes be rid of the sight of you!"

Deputy, with another sharp whistle, at once expressing his relief, and his commencement of a milder stoning of Mr. Durdles, begins stoning that respectable gentleman home, as if he were a reluctant ox. Mr. Jasper goes to his gatehouse, brooding. And thus, as everything comes to an end, the unaccountable expedition comes to an end—for the time.

CHAPTER XIII

BOTH AT THEIR BEST

Miss Twinkleton's establishment was about to undergo a serene hush. The Christmas recess was at hand. What had once, and at no remote period, been called, even by the erudite Miss Twinkleton herself, "the half"; but what was now called, as being more elegant, and more strictly collegiate, "the term," would expire to-morrow. A noticeable relaxation of discipline had for some few days pervaded the Nuns' House. Club suppers had occurred in the bedrooms, and a dressed tongue had been carved with a pair of scissors, and handed round with the curling tongues. Portions of marmalade had likewise been distributed on a service of plates constructed of curlpaper; and cowslip wine had been quaffed from the small squat measuring glass in which little Rickitts (a junior of weakly constitution) took her steel drops daily. The housemaids had been bribed with various fragments of riband, and sundry pairs of shoes more or less down at heel, to make no mention of crumbs, in the beds; the airiest costumes had been worn on these festive occasions; and the daring Miss Ferdinand had even surprised the company with a sprightly solo on the comb-and-curlpaper, until suffocated in her own pillow by two flowing-haired executioners.

Nor were these the only tokens of dispersal. Boxes appeared in the bedrooms (where they were capital at other times), and a surprising amount of packing took place, out of all proportion to the amount packed. Largess, in the form of odds and ends of cold cream and pomatum, and also of hairpins, was freely distributed among the attendants. On charges of inviolable secrecy, confidences were interchanged respecting golden youth of England expected to call, "at home," on the first opportunity. Miss Giggles (deficient in sentiment) did indeed profess that she, for her part, acknowledged such homage by making faces at the golden youth; but this young lady was outvoted by an immense majority.

On the last night before a recess, it was always expressly made a point of honour that nobody should go to sleep, and that Ghosts should be encouraged by all possible means. This compact invariably broke down, and all the young ladies went to sleep very soon, and got up very early.

The concluding ceremony came off at twelve o'clock on the day of departure; when Miss Twinkleton, supported by Mrs. Tisher, held a drawing-room in her own apartment (the globes already covered with brown holland), where glasses of white wine and plates of cut pound-cake were discovered on the table. Miss Twinkleton then said: Ladies, another revolving year had brought us round to that festive period at which the first feelings of our nature bounded in our—Miss Twinkleton was annually going to add "bosoms," but annually stopped on the brink of that expression, and substituted "hearts." Hearts; our hearts. Hem! Again a revolving year, ladies, had brought us to a pause in our studies—let us hope our greatly advanced studies—and, like the mariner in his bark, the warrior in his tent, the captive in his dungeon, and the traveller in his various conveyances, we yearned for home Did we say, on such an occasion, in the opening words of Mr. Addison's impressive tragedy:

> "The dawn is overcast, the morning lowers,
> And heavily in clouds brings on the day,
> The great, th' important day——?"

Not so. From horizon to zenith all was *couleur de rose*, for all was redolent of our relations and friends. Might *we* find *them* prospering as *we* expected; might *they* find *us* prospering as *they* expected! Ladies, we would now, with our love to one another, wish one another good-bye, and happiness, until we met again. And when the time should come for our resumption of those pursuits which (here a general depression set in all round), pursuits which, pursuits which;—then let us ever remember what was said by the Spartan General, in words too trite for repetition, at the battle it were superfluous to specify.

The handmaidens of the establishment, in their best caps, then handed the trays, and the young ladies sipped and crumbled, and the bespoken coaches began to choke the street. Then leave-taking was not long about; and Miss Twinkleton, in saluting each young lady's cheek, confided to her an exceedingly neat letter, addressed to her next friend at law, "with Miss Twinkleton's best compliments" in the corner. This missive she handed with an air as if it had not the least connexion with the bill, but were something in the nature of a delicate and joyful surprise.

So many times had Rosa seen such dispersals, and so very little did she know of any other Home, that she was contented to remain where she was, and was even better contented than ever before, having her latest friend with her. And yet her latest friendship had a blank place in it of which she could not fail to be sensible. Helena Landless, having been a party to her brother's revelation about Rosa, and having entered into that compact of silence with Mr. Crisparkle, shrank from any allusion to Edwin Drood's name. Why she so avoided it, was mysterious to Rosa, but she perfectly perceived the fact. But for the fact, she might have relieved her own little perplexed heart of some of its doubts and hesitations, by taking Helena into her confidence. As it was, she had no such vent: she could only ponder on her own difficulties, and wonder more and more why this avoidance of Edwin's name should last, now that she knew—for so much Helena had told her—that a good understanding was to be re-established between the two young men, when Edwin came down.

It would have made a pretty picture, so many pretty girls kissing Rosa in the cold porch of the Nuns' House, and that sunny little creature peeping out of it (unconscious of sly faces carved on spout and gable peeping at her), and waving farewells to the departing coaches, as if she represented the spirit of rosy youth abiding in the place to keep it bright and warm in its desertion. The hoarse High Street became musical with the cry, in various silvery voices, "Good-bye, Rosebud darling!" and the effigy of Mr. Sapsea's father over the opposite doorway seemed to say to mankind: "Gentlemen, favour me with your attention to this charming little last lot left behind, and bid with a spirit worthy of the occasion!" Then the staid street, so unwontedly sparkling, youthful, and fresh for a few rippling moments, ran dry, and Cloisterham was itself again.

If Rosebud in her bower now waited Edwin Drood's coming with an uneasy heart, Edwin for his part was uneasy too. With far less force of purpose in his composition than the childish beauty, crowned by acclamation fairy queen of Miss Twinkleton's establishment, he had a conscience, and Mr. Grewgious had pricked it. That gentleman's steady convictions of what was right and what was wrong in such a case as his, were neither to be frowned aside nor laughed aside. They would not be moved. But for the dinner in Staple Inn, and but for the ring he carried in the breast pocket of his coat, he would have drifted into their wedding-day without another pause for real thought, loosely trusting that all would go well, left alone. But that serious putting him on his truth to the living and the dead had brought him to a check. He must either give the ring to Rosa, or he must take it back. Once put into this narrowed way of action, it was curious that he began to consider Rosa's claims upon him more unselfishly than he had ever considered them before, and began to be less sure of himself than he had ever been in all his easy-going days.

"I will be guided by what she says, and by how we get on," was his decision, walking from the gatehouse to the Nuns' House. "Whatever comes of it, I will bear his words in mind, and try to be true to the living and the dead."

Rosa was dressed for walking. She expected him. It was a bright frosty day, and Miss Twinkleton had already graciously sanctioned fresh air. Thus they got out together before it became necessary for either Miss Twinkleton, or the deputy high-priest Mrs. Tisher, to lay even so much as one of those usual offerings on the shrine of Propriety.

"My dear Eddy," said Rosa, when they had turned out of the High Street, and had got among the quiet walks in the neighbourhood of the Cathedral and the river: "I want to say something very serious to you. I have been thinking about it for a long, long time."

"Good-bye, Rosebud, Darling."

"I want to be serious with you too, Rosa dear. I mean to be serious and earnest."

"Thank you, Eddy. And you will not think me unkind because I begin, will you? You will not think I speak for myself only, because I speak first? That would not be generous, would it? And I know you are generous!"

He said, "I hope I am not ungenerous to you, Rosa." He called her Pussy no more. Never again.

"And there is no fear," pursued Rosa, "of our quarrelling, is there? Because, Eddy," clasping her hand on his arm, "we have so much reason to be very lenient to each other!"

"We will be, Rosa."

"That's a dear good boy! Eddy, let us be courageous. Let us change to brother and sister from this day forth."

"Never be husband and wife?"

"Never!"

Neither spoke again for a little while. But after that pause he said, with some effort:

"Of course I know that this has been in both our minds, Rosa, and of course I am in honour bound to confess freely that it does not originate with you."

"No, nor with you, dear," she returned, with pathetic earnestness. "That sprung up between us. You are not truly happy in our engagement; I am not truly happy in it. O, I am so sorry, so sorry!" And there she broke into tears.

"I am deeply sorry too, Rosa. Deeply sorry for you."

"And I for you, poor boy! And I for you!"

This pure young feeling, this gentle and forbearing feeling of each towards the other, brought with it its reward in a softening light that seemed to shine on their position. The relations between them did not look wilful or capricious, or a failure, in such a light; they became elevated into something more self-denying, honourable, affectionate, and true.

"If we knew yesterday," said Rosa, as she dried her eyes, "and we did know yesterday, and on many, many yesterdays, that we were far from right together in those relations which were not of our own choosing, what better could we do to-day than change them? It is natural that we should be sorry, and you see how sorry we both are; but how much better to be sorry now than then!"

"When, Rosa?"

"When it would be too late. And then we should be angry besides."

Another silence fell upon them.

"And you know," said Rosa innocently, "you couldn't like me then; and you can always like me now, for I shall not be a drag upon you, or a worry to you. And I can always like you now, and your sister will not tease or trifle with you. I often did when I was not your sister, and I beg your pardon for it."

"Don't let us come to that, Rosa; or I shall want more pardoning than I like to think of."

"No, indeed, Eddy; you are too hard, my generous boy, upon yourself. Let us sit down, brother, on these ruins, and let me tell you how it was with us. I think I know, for I have considered about it very much since you were here last time. You liked me, didn't you? You thought I was a nice little thing?"

"Everybody thinks that, Rosa."

"Do they?" She knitted her brow musingly for a moment, and then flashed out with the bright little induction: "Well, but say they do. Surely it was not enough that you should think of me only as other people did; now, was it?"

The point was not to be got over. It was not enough.

"And that is just what I mean; that is just how it was with us," said Rosa. "You liked me very well, and you had grown used to me, and had grown used to the idea of our being married. You accepted the situation as an inevitable kind of thing, didn't you? It was to be, you thought, and why discuss or dispute it?"

It was new and strange to him to have himself presented to himself so clearly, in a glass of her holding up. He had always patronised her, in his superiority to her share of woman's wit. Was that but another instance of something radically amiss in the terms on which they had been gliding towards a life-long bondage?

"All this that I say of you is true of me as well, Eddy. Unless it was, I might not be bold enough to say it. Only, the difference between us was, that by little and little there crept into my mind a habit of thinking about it, instead of dismissing it. My life is not so busy as yours, you see, and I have not so many things to think of. So I thought about it very much, and I cried about it very much too (though that was not your fault, poor boy); when all at once my guardian came down, to prepare for my leaving the Nuns' House. I tried to hint to him that I was not quite settled in my mind, but I hesitated and failed, and he didn't understand me. But he is a good, good man. And he put before me so kindly, and yet so strongly, how seriously we ought to consider, in our circumstances, that I resolved to speak to you the next moment we were alone and grave. And if I seemed to come to it easily just now, because I came to it all at once, don't think it was so really, Eddy, for O, it was very, very hard, and O I am very, very, sorry!"

Her full heart broke into tears again. He put his arm about her waist, and they walked by the river-side together.

"Your guardian has spoken to me too, Rosa dear. I saw him before I left London." His right hand was in his breast, seeking the ring; but he checked it, as he thought: "If I am to take it back, why should I tell her of it?"

"And that made you more serious about it, didn't it, Eddy? And if I had not spoken to you, as I have, you would have spoken to me? I hope you can tell me so? I don't like it to be *all* my doing, though it *is* so much better for us."

"Yes, I should have spoken; I should have put everything before you; I came intending to do it. But I never could have spoken to you as you have spoken to me, Rosa."

"Don't say you mean so coldly, or unkindly, Eddy, please, if you can help it."

"I mean so sensibly and delicately, so wisely and affectionately."

"That's my dear brother!" She kissed his hand in a little rapture. "The dear girls will be dreadfully disappointed," added Rosa, laughing, with the dewdrops glistening in her bright eyes. "They have looked forward to it so, poor pets!"

"Ah! but I fear it will be a worse disappointment to Jack," said Edwin Drood, with a start. "I never thought of Jack!"

Her swift and intent look at him as he said the words could no more be recalled than a flash of lightning can. But it appeared as though she would have instantly recalled it, if she could; for she looked down, confused, and breathed quickly.

"You don't doubt its being a blow to Jack, Rosa?"

She merely replied, and that evasively and hurriedly: Why should she? She had not thought about it. He seemed, to her, to have so little to do with it.

"My dear child! can you suppose that any one so wrapped up in another—Mrs. Tope's expression: not mine—as Jack is in me, could fail to be struck all of a heap by such a sudden and complete change in my life? I say sudden, because it will be sudden to *him*, you know."

She nodded twice or thrice and her lips parted as if she would have assented. But she uttered no sound, and her breathing was no slower.

"How shall I tell Jack?" said Edwin, ruminating. If he had been less occupied with the thought, he must have seen her singular emotion. "I never thought of Jack. It must be broken to him, before the town-crier knows it. I dine with the dear fellow to-morrow and next day—Christmas Eve and Christmas Day—but it would never do to spoil his feast-days. He always worries about me, and moddley-coddleys in the merest trifles. The news is sure to overset him. How on earth shall this be broken to Jack?"

"He must be told, I suppose?" said Rosa.

"My dear Rosa! who ought to be in our confidence, if not Jack?"

"My guardian promised to come down, if I should write and ask him. I am going to do so. Would you like to leave it to him?"

"A bright idea!" cried Edwin. "The other trustee. Nothing more natural. He comes down, he goes to Jack, he relates what we have agreed upon, and he states our case better than we could. He has already spoken feelingly to you, he has already spoken feelingly to me, and he'll put the whole thing feelingly to Jack. That's it! I am not a coward, Rosa, but to tell you a secret, I am a little afraid of Jack."

"No, no! you are not afraid of him!" cried Rosa, turning white, and clasping her hands.

"Why, sister Rosa, sister Rosa, what do you see from the turret?" said Edwin, rallying her. "My dear girl!"

"You frightened me."

"Most unintentionally, but I am as sorry as if I had meant to do it. Could you possibly suppose for a moment, from any loose way of speaking of mine, that I was literally afraid of the dear fond fellow? What I mean is, that he is subject to a kind of paroxysm, or fit—I saw him in it once—and I don't know but that so great a surprise, coming upon him direct from me whom he is so wrapped up in, might bring it on perhaps. Which—and this is the secret I was going to tell you—is another reason for your guardian's making the communication. He is so steady, precise, and exact, that he will talk Jack's thoughts into shape, in no time: whereas with me Jack is always impulsive and hurried, and, I may say, almost womanish."

Rosa seemed convinced. Perhaps from her own very different point of view of "Jack," she felt comforted and protected by the interposition of Mr. Grewgious between herself and him.

And now, Edwin Drood's right hand closed again upon the ring in its little case, and again was checked by the consideration: "It is certain, now, that I am to give it back to him; then why should I tell her of it?" That pretty sympathetic nature which could be so sorry for him in the blight of their childish hopes of happiness together, and could so quietly find itself alone in a new world to weave fresh wreaths of such flowers as it might prove to bear, the old world's flowers being withered, would be grieved by those sorrowful jewels; and to what purpose? Why should it be? They were but a sign of broken joys and baseless projects; in their very beauty they were (as the unlikeliest of men had said) almost a cruel satire on the loves, hopes, plans, of humanity, which are able to forecast nothing, and are so much brittle dust. Let them be. He would restore them to her guardian when he came down; he in his turn would restore them to the cabinet from which he had unwillingly taken them; and there, like old letters or old vows, or other records of old aspirations come to nothing, they would be disregarded, until, being valuable, they were sold into circulation again, to repeat their former round.

Let them be. Let them lie unspoken of, in his breast. However distinctly or indistinctly he entertained these thoughts, he arrived at the conclusion, Let them be. Among the mighty store of wonderful chains that are for ever forging, day and night, in the vast iron-works of time and circumstance, there was one chain forged in the moment of that small conclusion, riveted to the foundations of heaven and earth, and gifted with invincible force to hold and drag.

They walked on by the river. They began to speak of their separate plans. He would quicken his departure from England, and she would remain where she was, at least as long as Helena remained. The poor dear girls should have their disappointment broken to them gently, and, as the first preliminary, Miss Twinkleton should be confided in by Rosa, even in advance of the reappearance of Mr. Grewgious. It should be made clear in all quarters that she and Edwin were the best of friends. There had never been so serene an understanding between them since they were first affianced. And yet there was one reservation on each side; on hers, that she intended through her guardian to withdraw herself immediately from the tuition of her music-master; on his, that he did already entertain some wandering speculations whether it might ever come to pass that he would know more of Miss Landless.

The bright frosty day declined as they walked and spoke together. The sun dipped in the river far behind them, and the old city lay red before them, as their walk drew to a close. The moaning water cast its seaweed duskily at their feet, when they turned to leave its margin; and the rooks hovered about them with hoarse cries, darker splashes in the darkening air.

"I will prepare Jack for my flitting soon," said Edwin, in a low voice, "and I will but see your guardian when he comes, and then go before they speak together. It will be better done without my being by. Don't you think so?"

"Yes."

"We know we have done right, Rosa?"

"Yes."

"We know we are better so, even now?"

"And shall be far, far better so by and by."

Still there was that lingering tenderness in their hearts towards the old positions they were relinquishing, that they prolonged their parting. When they came among the elm-trees by the Cathedral, where they had last sat together, they stopped as by consent, and Rosa raised her face to his, as she had never raised it in the old days;—for they were old already.

"God bless you, dear! Good-bye!"

"God bless you, dear! Good-bye!"

They kissed each other fervently.

"Now, please take me home, Eddy, and let me be by myself."

"Don't look round, Rosa," he cautioned her, as he drew her arm through his, and led her away. "Didn't you see Jack?"

"No! Where?"

"Under the trees. He saw us, as we took leave of each other. Poor fellow! he little thinks we have parted. This will be a blow to him, I am much afraid!"

She hurried on, without resting, and hurried on until they had passed under the gatehouse into the street; once there, she asked:

"Has he followed us? You can look without seeming to. Is he behind?"

"No. Yes, he is! He has just passed out under the gateway. The dear sympathetic old fellow likes to keep us in sight. I am afraid he will be bitterly disappointed!"

She pulled hurriedly at the handle of the hoarse old bell, and the gate soon opened. Before going in, she gave him one last wide wondering look, as if she would have asked him with imploring emphasis: "O! don't you understand?" And out of that look he vanished from her view.

CHAPTER XIV

WHEN SHALL THESE THREE MEET AGAIN?

CHRISTMAS EVE in Cloisterham. A few strange faces in the streets; a few other faces, half strange and half familiar, once the faces of Cloisterham children, now the faces of men and women who come back from the outer world at long intervals to find the city wonderfully shrunken in size, as if it had not washed by any means well in the meanwhile. To these, the striking of the Cathedral clock, and the cawing of the rooks from the Cathedral tower, are like voices of their nursery time. To such as these, it has happened in their dying hours afar off, that they have imagined their chamber-floor to be strewn with the autumnal leaves fallen from the elm-trees in the Close: so have the rustling sounds and fresh scents of their earliest impressions revived when the circle of their lives was very nearly traced, and the beginning and the end were drawing close together.

Seasonable tokens are about. Red berries shine here and there in the lattices of Minor Canon Corner; Mr. and Mrs. Tope are daintily sticking sprigs of holly into the carvings and sconces of the Cathedral stalls, as if they were sticking them into the coat-buttonholes of the Dean and Chapter. Lavish profusion is in the shops: particularly in the articles of currants, raisins, spices, candied peel, and moist sugar. An unusual air of gallantry and dissipation is abroad; evinced in an immense bunch of mistletoe hanging in the greengrocer's shop doorway, and a poor little Twelfth Cake, culminating in the figure of a Harlequin—such a very poor little Twelfth Cake, that one would rather call it a Twenty-fourth Cake or a Forty-eighth Cake—to be raffled for at the pastry-cook's, terms one shilling per member. Public amusements are not wanting. The Wax-Work which made so deep an impression on the reflective mind of the Emperor of China is to be seen by particular desire during Christmas Week only, on the premises of the bankrupt livery-stablekeeper up the lane; and a new grand comic Christmas pantomime is to be produced at the Theatre: the latter heralded by the portrait of Signor Jacksonini the clown, saying "How do you do to-morrow?" quite as large as life, and almost as miserably. In short, Cloisterham is up and doing: though from this description the High School and Miss Twinkleton's are to be excluded. From the former establishment the scholars have gone home, every one of them in love with one of Miss Twinkleton's young ladies (who knows nothing about it); and only the handmaidens flutter occasionally in the windows of the latter. It is noticed, by the bye, that these damsels become, within the limits of decorum, more skittish when thus intrusted with the concrete representation of their sex, than when dividing the representation with Miss Twinkleton's young ladies.

Three are to meet at the gatehouse to-night. How does each one of the three get through the day?

Neville Landless, though absolved from his books for the time by Mr. Crisparkle—whose fresh nature is by no means insensible to the charms of a holiday—reads and writes in his quiet room, with a concentrated air, until it is two hours past noon. He then sets himself to clearing his table, to arranging his books, and to tearing up and burning his stray papers. He makes a clean sweep of all untidy accumulations, puts all his drawers in order, and leaves no note or scrap of paper undestroyed, save such memoranda as bear directly on his studies. This done, he turns to his wardrobe, selects a few articles of ordinary wear—among them, change of stout shoes and socks for walking—and packs these in a knapsack. This knapsack is new, and he bought it in the High Street yesterday. He also purchased, at the same time and at the same place, a heavy walking-stick; strong in the handle for the grip of the hand, and iron-shod. He tries this, swings it, poises it, and lays it by, with the knapsack, on a window-seat. By this time his arrangements are complete.

He dresses for going out, and is in the act of going—indeed has left his room, and has met the Minor Canon on the staircase, coming out of his bedroom upon the same story—when he turns back again for his walking-stick, thinking he will carry it now. Mr. Crisparkle, who has paused on the staircase, sees it in his hand on his immediately reappearing, takes it from him, and asks him with a smile how he chooses a stick?

"Really I don't know that I understand the subject," he answers. "I choose it for its weight."

"Much too heavy, Neville; *much* too heavy."

"To rest upon in a long walk, sir?"

"Rest upon?" repeats Mr. Crisparkle, throwing himself into pedestrian form. "You don't rest upon it; you merely balance with it."

"I shall know better, with practice, sir. I have not lived in a walking country, you know."

"True," says Mr. Crisparkle. "Get into a little training, and we will have a few score miles together. I should leave you nowhere now. Do you come back before dinner?"

"I think not, as we dine early."

Mr. Crisparkle gives him a bright nod and a cheerful good-bye; expressing (not without intention) absolute confidence and ease.

Neville repairs to the Nuns' House, and requests that Miss Landless may be informed that her brother is there, by appointment. He waits at the gate, not even crossing the threshold; for he is on his parole not to put himself in Rosa's way.

His sister is at least as mindful of the obligation they have taken on themselves as he can be, and loses not a moment in joining him. They meet affectionately, avoid lingering there, and walk towards the upper inland country.

"I am not going to tread upon forbidden ground, Helena," says Neville, when they have walked some distance and are turning; "you will understand in another moment that I cannot help referring to—what shall I say?—my infatuation."

"Had you not better avoid it, Neville? You know that I can hear nothing."

"You can hear, my dear, what Mr. Crisparkle has heard, and heard with approval."

"Yes; I can hear so much."

"Well, it is this. I am not only unsettled and unhappy myself, but I am conscious of unsettling and interfering with other people. How do I know that, but for my unfortunate presence, you, and—and—the rest of that former party, our engaging guardian excepted, might be dining cheerfully in Minor Canon Corner to-morrow? Indeed it probably would be so. I can see too well that I am not high in the old lady's opinion, and it is easy to understand what an irksome clog I must be upon the hospitalities of her orderly house—especially at this time of year—when I must be kept asunder from this person, and there is such a reason for my not being brought into contact with that person, and an unfavourable reputation has preceded me with such another person; and so on. I have put this very gently to Mr. Crisparkle, for you know his self-denying ways; but still I have put it. What I have laid much greater stress upon at the same time is, that I am engaged in a miserable struggle with myself, and that a little change and absence may enable me to come through it the better. So, the weather being bright and hard, I am going on a walking expedition, and intend taking myself out of everybody's way (my own included, I hope) to-morrow morning."

"When to come back?"

"In a fortnight."

"And going quite alone?"

"I am much better without company, even if there were any one but you to bear me company, my dear Helena."

"Mr. Crisparkle entirely agrees, you say?"

"Entirely. I am not sure but that at first he was inclined to think it rather a moody scheme, and one that might do a brooding mind harm. But we took a moonlight walk last Monday night, to talk it over at leisure, and I represented the case to him as it really is. I showed him that I do want to conquer myself, and that, this evening well got over, it is surely better that I should be away from here just now, than here. I could hardly help meeting certain people walking together here, and that could do no good, and is certainly not the way to forget. A fortnight hence, that chance will probably be over, for the time; and when it again arises for the last time, why, I can again go away. Farther, I really do feel hopeful of bracing exercise and wholesome fatigue. You know that Mr. Crisparkle allows such things their full weight in the preservation of his own sound mind in his own sound body, and that his just spirit is not likely to maintain one set of natural laws for himself and another for me. He yielded to my view of the matter, when convinced that I was honestly in earnest; and so, with his full consent, I start to-morrow morning. Early enough to be not only out of the streets, but out of hearing of the bells, when the good people go to church."

Helena thinks it over, and thinks well of it. Mr. Crisparkle doing so, she would do so; but she does originally, out of her own mind, think well of it, as a healthy project, denoting a sincere endeavour and an active attempt at self-correction. She is inclined to pity him, poor fellow, for going away solitary on the great Christmas festival; but she feels it much more to the purpose to encourage him. And she does encourage him.

He will write to her?

He will write to her every alternate day, and tell her all his adventures.

Does he send clothes on in advance of him?

"My dear Helena, no. Travel like a pilgrim, with wallet and staff. My wallet—or my knapsack—is packed, and ready for strapping on; and here is my staff!"

He hands it to her; she makes the same remark as Mr. Crisparkle, that it is very heavy; and gives it back to him, asking what wood it is? Iron-wood.

Up to this point he has been extremely cheerful. Perhaps, the having to carry his case with her, and therefore to present it in its brightest aspect, has roused his spirits. Perhaps, the having done so with success, is followed by a revulsion. As the day closes in, and the city-lights begin to spring up before them, he grows depressed.

"I wish I were not going to this dinner, Helena."

"Dear Neville, is it worth while to care much about it? Think how soon it will be over."

"How soon it will be over!" he repeats gloomily. "Yes. But I don't like it."

There may be a moment's awkwardness, she cheeringly represents to him, but it can only last a moment. He is quite sure of himself.

"I wish I felt as sure of everything else, as I feel of myself," he answers her.

"How strangely you speak, dear! What do you mean?"

"Helena, I don't know. I only know that I don't like it. What a strange dead weight there is in the air!"

She calls his attention to those copperous clouds beyond the river, and says that the wind is rising. He scarcely speaks again, until he takes leave of her, at the gate of the Nuns' House. She does not immediately enter, when they have parted, but remains looking after him along the street. Twice he passes the gatehouse, reluctant to enter. At length, the Cathedral clock chiming one quarter, with a rapid turn he hurries in.

And so *he* goes up the postern stair.

Edwin Drood passes a solitary day. Something of deeper moment than he had thought has gone out of his life; and in the silence of his own chamber he wept for it last night. Though the image of Miss Landless still hovers in the background of his mind, the pretty little affectionate creature, so much firmer and wiser than he had supposed, occupies its stronghold. It is with some misgiving of his own unworthiness that he thinks of her, and of what they might have been to one another, if he had been more in earnest some time ago; if he had set a higher value on her; if, instead of accepting his lot in life as an inheritance of course, he had studied the right way to its appreciation and enhancement. And still, for all this, and though there is a sharp heartache in all this, the vanity and caprice of youth sustain that handsome figure of Miss Landless in the background of his mind.

That was a curious look of Rosa's when they parted at the gate. Did it mean that she saw below the surface of his thoughts, and down into their twilight depths? Scarcely that, for it was a look of astonished and keen inquiry. He decides that he cannot understand it, though it was remarkably expressive.

As he only waits for Mr. Grewgious now, and will depart immediately after having seen him, he takes a sauntering leave of the ancient city and its neighbourhood. He recalls the time when Rosa and he walked here or there, mere children, full of the dignity of being engaged. Poor children! he thinks, with pitying sadness.

Finding that his watch has stopped, he turns into the jeweller's shop, to have it wound and set. The jeweller is knowing on the subject of a bracelet, which he begs leave to submit, in a general and quite aimless way. It would suit (he considers) a young bride to perfection; especially if of a rather diminutive style of beauty. Finding the bracelet but coldly looked at, the jeweller invited attention to a tray of rings for gentlemen; here is a style of ring, now, he remarks—a very chaste signet—which gentlemen are much given to purchasing,when changing their condition. A ring of a very responsible appearance. With the date of their wedding-day engraved inside, several gentlemen have preferred it to any other kind of memento.

The rings are as coldly viewed as the bracelet. Edwin tells the tempter that he wears no jewellery but his watch and chain, which were his father's; and his shirt-pin.

"That I was aware of," is the jeweller's reply, "for Mr. Jasper dropped in for a watch-glass the other day, and, in fact, I showed these articles to him, remarking that if he *should* wish to make a present to a gentleman relative, on any particular occasion— But he said with a smile that he had an inventory in his mind of all the jewellery his gentleman relative ever wore; namely, his watch and chain, and his shirt-pin." Still (the jeweller considers) that might not apply to all times, though applying to the present time. "Twenty minutes past two, Mr. Drood, I set your watch at. Let me recommend you not to let it run down, sir."

Edwin takes his watch, puts it on, and goes out, thinking: "Dear old Jack! If I were to make an extra crease in my neck-cloth, he would think it worth noticing!"

He strolls about and about, to pass the time until the dinner-hour. It somehow happens that Cloisterham seems reproachful to him to-day; has fault to find with him, as if he had not used it well; but is far more pensive with him than angry. His wonted carelessness is replaced by a wistful looking at, and dwelling upon, all the old landmarks. He will soon be far away, and may never see them again, he thinks. Poor youth! Poor youth!

As dusk draws on, he paces the Monks' Vineyard. He has walked to and fro half an hour by the Cathedral chimes, and it has closed in dark, before he becomes quite aware of a woman crouching on the ground near a wicket gate in a corner. The gate commands a cross bye-path, little used in the gloaming; and the figure must have been there all the time, though he has but gradually and lately made it out.

He strikes into that path, and walks up to the wicket. By the light of a lamp near it, he sees that the woman is of a haggard appearance, and that her weazen chin is resting on her hands, and that her eyes are staring—with an unwinking, blind sort of steadfastness—before her.

Always kindly, but moved to be unusually kind this evening, and having bestowed kind words on most of the children and aged people he has met, he at once bends down, and speaks to this woman.

"Are you ill?"

"No, deary," she answers, without looking at him, and with no departure from her strange blind stare.

"Are you blind?"

"No, deary."

"Are you lost, homeless, faint? What is the matter, that you stay here in the cold so long, without moving?"

By slow and stiff efforts, she appears to contract her vision until it can rest upon him; and then a curious film passes over her, and she begins to shake.

He straightens himself, recoils a step, and looks down at her in a dread amazement; for he seems to know her.

"Good Heaven!" he thinks, next moment. "Like Jack that night!"

As he looks down at her, she looks up at him, and whimpers: "My lungs is weakly; my lungs is dreffle bad. Poor me, poor me, my cough is rattling dry!" and coughs in confirmation horribly.

"Where do you come from?"

"Come from London, deary." (Her cough still rending her.)

"Where are you going to?"

"Back to London, deary. I came here, looking for a needle in a haystack, and I ain't found it. Look'ee, deary; give me three-and-sixpence, and don't you be afeard for me. I'll get back to London then, and trouble no one. I'm in a business.—Ah, me! It's slack, it's slack, and times is very bad!—but I can make a shift to live by it."

"Do you eat opium?"

"Smokes it," she replies with difficulty, still racked by her cough. "Give me three-and-sixpence, and I'll lay it out well, and get back. If you don't give me three-and-sixpence, don't give me a brass farden. And if you do give me three-and-sixpence, deary, I'll tell you something."

He counts the money from his pocket, and puts it in her hand. She instantly clutches it tight, and rises to her feet with a croaking laugh of satisfaction.

"Bless ye! Hark'ee, dear genl'mn. What's your Chris'en name?"

"Edwin."

"Edwin, Edwin, Edwin," she repeats, trailing off into a drowsy repetition of the word; and then asks suddenly: "Is the short of that name Eddy?"

"It is sometimes called so," he replies, with the colour starting to his face.

"Don't sweethearts call it so?" she asks, pondering.

"How should I know?"

"Haven't you a sweetheart, upon your soul?"

"None."

She is moving away, with another "Bless ye, and thank'ee, deary!" when he adds: "You were to tell me something; you may as well do so."

"So I was, so I was. Well, then. Whisper. You be thankful that your name ain't Ned."

He looks at her quite steadily, as he asks: "Why?"

"Because it's a bad name to have just now."

"How a bad name?"

"A threatened name. A dangerous name."

"The proverb says that threatened men live long," he tells her, lightly.

"Then Ned—so threatened is he, wherever he may be while I am a-talking to you, deary—should live to all eternity!" replies the woman.

She has leaned forward to say it in his ear, with her forefinger shaking before his eyes, and now huddles herself together, and with another "Bless ye, and thank'ee!" goes away in the direction of the Travellers' Lodging House.

This is not an inspiriting close to a dull day. Alone, in a sequestered place, surrounded by vestiges of old time and decay, it rather has a tendency to call a shudder into being. He makes for the better-lighted streets, and resolves as he walks on to say nothing of this to-night, but to mention it to Jack (who alone calls him Ned) as an odd coincidence, to-morrow; of course only as a coincidence, and not as anything better worth remembering.

Still it holds to him, as many things much better worth remembering never did. He has another mile or so, to linger out before the dinner-hour; and, when he walks over the bridge and by the river, the woman's words are in the rising wind, in the angry sky, in the troubled water, in the flickering lights. There is some solemn echo of them even in the Cathedral chime, which strikes a sudden surprise to his heart as he turns in under the archway of the gatehouse.

And so *he* goes up the postern stair.

John Jasper passes a more agreeable and cheerful day than either of his guests. Having no music-lessons to give in the holiday season, his time is his own, but for the Cathedral services. He is early among the shopkeepers, ordering little table luxuries that his nephew likes. His nephew will not be with him long, he tells his provision-dealers, and so must be petted and made much of. While out on his hospitable preparations, he looks in on Mr. Sapsea; and mentions that dear Ned, and that inflammable young spark of Mr. Crisparkle's, are to dine at the gatehouse to-day, and make up their difference. Mr. Sapsea is by no means friendly towards the inflammable young spark. He says that his complexion is "un-English." And when Mr. Sapsea has once declared anything to be un-English he considers that thing everlastingly sunk in the bottomless pit.

John Jasper is truly sorry to hear Mr. Sapsea speak thus, for he knows right well that Mr. Sapsea never speaks without a meaning, and that he has a subtle trick of being right. Mr. Sapsea (by a very remarkable coincidence) is of exactly that opinion.

Mr. Jasper is in beautiful voice this day. In the pathetic supplication to have his heart inclined to keep this law, he quite astonishes his fellows by his melodious power. He has never sung difficult music with such skill and harmony, as in this day's Anthem. His nervous temperament is occasionally prone to take difficult music a little too quickly; to-day, his time is perfect.

These results are probably attained through a grand composure of the spirits. The mere mechanism of his throat is a little tender, for he wears, both with his singing-robe and with his ordinary dress, a large black scarf of strong closewoven silk, slung loosely round his neck. But his composure is so noticeable, that Mr. Crisparkle speaks of it as they come out from Vespers.

"I must thank you, Jasper, for the pleasure with which I have heard you to-day. Beautiful! Delightful! You could not have so outdone yourself, I hope, without being wonderfully well."

"I *am* wonderfully well."

"Nothing unequal," says the Minor Canon, with a smooth motion of his hand: "nothing unsteady, nothing forced, nothing avoided; all thoroughly done in a masterly manner, with perfect self-command."

"Thank you. I hope so, if it is not too much to say."

"One would think, Jasper, you had been trying a new medicine for that occasional indisposition of yours."

"No, really? That's well observed; for I have."

"Then stick to it, my good fellow," says Mr. Crisparkle, clapping him on the shoulder with friendly encouragement, "stick to it."

"I will."

"I congratulate you," Mr. Crisparkle pursues, as they come out of the Cathedral, "on all accounts."

"Thank you again. I will walk round to the corner with you, if you don't object; I have plenty of time before my company come; and I want to say a word to you, which I think you will not be displeased to hear."

"What is it?"

"Well. We were speaking, the other evening, of my black humours."

Mr. Crisparkle's face falls, and he shakes his head deploringly.

"I said, you know, that I should make you an antidote to those black humours; and you said you hoped I would consign them to the flames."

"And I still hope so, Jasper."

"With the best reason in the world! I mean to burn this year's Diary at the year's end."

"Because you——?" Mr. Crisparkle brightens greatly as he thus begins.

"You anticipate me. Because I feel that I have been out of sorts, gloomy, bilious, brain-oppressed, whatever it may be. You said I had been exaggerative. So I have."

Mr. Crisparkle's brightened face brightens still more.

"I couldn't see it then, because I *was* out of sorts; but I am in a healthier state now, and I acknowledge it with genuine pleasure. I made a great deal of a very little; that's the fact."

"It does me good," cried Mr. Crisparkle, "to hear you say it!"

"A man leading a monotonous life," Jasper proceeds, "and getting his nerves, or his stomach, out of order, dwells upon an idea until it loses its proportions. That was my case with the idea in question. So I shall burn the evidence of my case, when the book is full, and begin the next volume with a clearer vision."

"This is better," says Mr. Crisparkle, stopping at the steps of his own door to shake hands, "than I could have hoped."

"Why, naturally," returns Jasper. "You had but little reason to hope that I should become more like yourself. You are always training yourself to be, mind and body, as clear as crystal, and you always are, and never change; whereas I am a muddy, solitary, moping weed. However, I have got over that mope. Shall I wait, while you ask if Mr. Neville has left for my place? If not, he and I may walk round together."

"I think," says Mr. Crisparkle, opening the entrance-door with his key, "that he left some time ago; at least I know he left, and I think he has not come back. But I'll inquire. You won't come in."

"My company wait," said Jasper, with a smile.

The Minor Canon disappears, and in a few moments returns. As he thought, Mr. Neville has not come back; indeed, as he remembers now, Mr. Neville said he would probably go straight to the gatehouse.

"Bad manners in a host!" says Jasper. "My company will be there before me! What will you bet that I don't find my company embracing?"

"I will bet—or I would, if ever I did bet," returns Mr. Crisparkle, "that your company will have a gay entertainer this evening."

Jasper nods, and laughs good-night!

He retraces his steps to the Cathedral door, and turns down past it to the gatehouse. He sings, in a low voice and with delicate expression, as he walks along. It still seems as if a false note were not within his power to-night, and as if nothing could hurry or retard him. Arriving thus under the arched entrance of his dwelling, he pauses for an instant in the shelter to pull off that great black scarf, and hang it in a loop upon his arm. For that brief time, his face is knitted and stern. But it immediately clears, as he resumes his singing, and his way.

And so *he* goes up the postern stair.

The red light burns steadily all the evening in the lighthouse on the margin of the tide of busy life. Softened sounds and hum of traffic pass it and flow on irregularly into the lonely Precincts; but very little else goes by, save violent rushes of wind. It comes on to blow a boisterous gale.

The Precincts are never particularly well lighted; but the strong blasts of wind blowing out many of the lamps (in some instances shattering the frames too, and bringing the glass rattling to the ground), they are unusually dark to-night. The darkness is augmented and confused, by flying dust from the earth, dry twigs from the trees, and great ragged fragments from the rooks' nests up in the tower. The trees themselves so toss and creak, as this tangible part of the darkness madly whirls about, that they seem in peril of being torn out of the earth: while ever and again a crack, and a rushing fall, denote that some large branch has yielded to the storm.

Not such power of wind has blown for many a winter night. Chimneys topple in the streets, and people hold to posts and corners, and to one another, to keep themselves upon their feet. The violent rushes abate not, but increase in frequency and fury until at midnight, when the streets are empty, the storm goes thundering along them, rattling at all the latches, and tearing at all the shutters, as if warning the people to get up and fly with it, rather than have the roofs brought down upon their brains.

Still, the red light burns steadily. Nothing is steady but the red light.

All through the night the wind blows, and abates not. But early in the morning, when there is barely enough light in the east to dim the stars, it begins to lull. From that time, with occasional wild charges, like a wounded monster dying, it drops and sinks; and at full daylight it is dead.

It is then seen that the hands of the Cathedral clock are torn off; that lead from the roof has been stripped away, rolled up, and blown into the Close; and that some stones have been displaced upon the summit of the great tower. Christmas morning though it be, it is necessary to send up workmen to ascertain the extent of the damage done. These, led by Durdles, go aloft; while Mr. Tope and a crowd of early idlers gather down in Minor Canon Corner, shading their eyes and watching for their appearance up there.

This cluster is suddenly broken and put aside by the hand of Mr. Jasper; all the gazing eyes are brought down to the earth by his loudly inquiring of Mr. Crisparkle, at an open window:

"Where is my nephew?"

"He has not been here. Is he not with you?"

"No. He went down to the river last night, with Mr. Neville, to look at the storm, and has not been back. Call Mr. Neville!"

"He left this morning, early."

"Left this morning early? Let me in! let me in!"

There is no more looking up at the tower, now. All the assembled eyes are turned on Mr. Jasper, white, half-dressed, panting, and clinging to the rail before the Minor Canon's house.

CHAPTER XV

IMPEACHED

NEVILLE LANDLESS had started so early and walked at so good a pace, that when the church-bells began to ring in Cloisterham for morning service, he was eight miles away. As he wanted his breakfast by that time, having set forth on a crust of bread, he stopped at the next roadside tavern to refresh.

Visitors in want of breakfast—unless they were horses or cattle, for which class of guests there was preparation enough in the way of water-trough and hay—were so unusual at the sign of The Tilted Wagon, that it took a long time to get the wagon into the track of tea and toast and bacon. Neville in the interval, sitting in a sanded parlour, wondering in how long a time after he had gone, the sneezy fire of damp fagots would begin to make somebody else warm.

Indeed, The Tilted Wagon, as a cool establishment on the top of a hill, where the ground before the door was puddled with damp hoofs and trodden straw; where a scolding landlady slapped a moist baby (with one red sock on and one wanting) in the bar; where the cheese was cast aground upon a shelf, in company with a mouldy tablecloth and a green-handled knife, in a sort of cast-iron canoe; where the pale-faced bread shed tears of crumb over its shipwreck in another canoe; where the family linen, half washed and half dried, led a public life of lying about; where everything to drink was drunk out of mugs, and everything else was suggestive of a rhyme to mugs; The Tilted Wagon, all these things considered, hardly kept its painted promise of providing good entertainment for Man and Beast. However, Man, in the present case, was not critical, but took what entertainment he could get, and went on again after a longer rest than he needed.

He stopped at some quarter of a mile from the house, hesitating whether to pursue the road, or to follow a cart track between two high hedgerows, which led across the slope of a breezy heath, and evidently struck into the road again by and by. He decided in favour of this latter track, and pursued it with some toil; the rise being steep, and the way worn into deep ruts.

He was labouring along, when he became aware of some other pedestrians behind him. As they were coming up at a faster pace than his, he stood aside, against one of the high banks, to let them pass. But their manner was very curious. Only four of them passed. Other four slackened speed, and loitered as intending to follow him when he should go on. The remainder of the party (half-a-dozen perhaps) turned, and went back at a great rate.

He looked at the four behind him, and he looked at the four before him. They all returned his look. He resumed his way. The four in advance went on, constantly looking back; the four in the rear came closing up.

When they all ranged out from the narrow track upon the open slope of the heath, and this order was maintained, let him diverge as he would to either side, there was no longer room to doubt that he was beset by these fellows. He stopped, as a last test; and they all stopped.

"Why do you attend upon me in this way?" he asks the whole body. "Are you a pack of thieves?"

"Don't answer him," said one of the number; he did not see which. "Better be quiet."

"Better be quiet?" repeated Neville. "Who said so?"

Nobody replied.

"It's good advice, whichever of you skulkers gave it," he went on angrily. "I will not submit to be penned in between four men there, and four men there. I wish to pass, and I mean to pass, those four in front."

They were all standing still; himself included.

"If eight men, or four men, or two men, set upon one," he proceeded, growing more enraged, "the one has no chance but to set his mark upon some of them. And, by the Lord, I'll do it, if I am interrupted any farther!"

Shouldering his heavy stick, and quickening his pace, he shot on to pass the four ahead. The largest and strongest man of the number changed swiftly to the side on which he came up, and dexterously closed with him and went down with him; but not before the heavy stick had descended smartly.

"Let him be!" said this man in a suppressed voice, as they struggled together on the grass. "Fair play! His is the build of a girl to mine, and he's got a weight strapped to his back besides. Let him alone. I'll manage him."

After a little rolling about, in a close scuffle which caused the faces of both to be besmeared with blood, the man took his knee from Neville's chest, and rose, saying: "There! Now take him arm-in-arm, any two of you!"

It was immediately done.

"As to our being a pack of thieves, Mr. Landless," said the man, as he spat out some blood, and wiped more from his face; "you know better than that at midday. We wouldn't have touched you if you hadn't forced us. We're going to take you round to the high road, anyhow, and you'll find help enough against thieves there, if you want it.—Wipe his face somebody; see how it's a-trickling down him!"

When his face was cleansed, Neville recognised in the speaker, Joe, driver of the Cloisterham omnibus, whom he had seen but once, and that on the day of his arrival.

"And what I recommend you for the present, is, don't talk, Mr.

Landless. You'll find a friend waiting for you, at the high road—gone ahead by the other way when we split into two parties—and you had much better say nothing till you come up with him. Bring that stick along, somebody else, and let's be moving!"

Utterly bewildered, Neville stared around him and said not a word. Walking between his two conductors, who held his arms in theirs, he went on, as in a dream, until they came again into the high road, and into the midst of a little group of people. The men who had turned back were among the group; and its central figures were Mr. Jasper and Mr. Crisparkle. Neville's conductors took him up to the Minor Canon, and there released him, as an act of deference to that gentleman.

"What is all this, sir? What is the matter? I feel as if I had lost my senses!" cried Neville, the group closing in around him.

"Where is my nephew?" asked Mr. Jasper, wildly.

"Where is your nephew?" repeated Neville. "Why do you ask me?"

"I ask you," retorted Jasper, "because you were the last person in his company, and he is not to be found."

"Not to be found!" cried Neville, aghast.

"Stay, stay," said Mr. Crisparkle. "Permit me, Jasper. Mr. Neville, you are confounded; collect your thoughts; it is of great importance that you should collect your thoughts; attend to me."

"I will try, sir, but I seem mad."

"You left Mr. Jasper last night with Edwin Drood?"

"Yes."

"At what hour?"

"Was it twelve o'clock?" asked Neville, with his hand to his confused head, and appealing to Jasper.

"Quite right," said Mr. Crisparkle; "the hour Mr. Jasper has already named to me. You went down to the river together?"

"Undoubtedly! To see the action of the wind there."

"What followed? How long did you stay there?"

"About ten minutes; I should say not more. We then walked together to your house, and he took leave of me at the door."

"Did he say that he was going down to the river again?"

"No. He said that he was going straight back."

The bystanders looked at one another, and at Mr. Crisparkle. To whom Mr. Jasper, who had been intensely watching Neville, said, in a low, distinct, suspicious voice: "What are those stains upon his dress?"

All eyes were turned towards the blood upon his clothes.

"And here are the same stains upon this stick!" said Jasper, taking it from the hand of the man who held it. "I know the stick to be his, and he carried it last night. What does this mean?"

"In the name of God, say what it means, Neville!" urged Mr. Crisparkle.

"That man and I," said Neville, pointing out his late adversary, "had a struggle for the stick just now, and you may see the same marks on him, sir. What was I to suppose, when I found myself molested by eight people? Could I dream of the true reason when they would give me none at all?"

They admitted that they had thought it discreet to be silent, and that the struggle had taken place. And yet the very men who had seen it looked darkly at the smears which the bright cold air had already dried.

"We must return, Neville," said Mr. Crisparkle; "of course you will be glad to come back to clear yourself?"

"Of course, sir."

"Mr. Landless will walk at my side," the Minor Canon continued, looking around him. "Come, Neville!"

They set forth on the walk back; and the others, with one exception, straggled after them at various distances. Jasper walked on the other side of Neville, and never quitted that position. He was silent, while Mr. Crisparkle more than once repeated his former questions, and while Neville repeated his former answers; also, while they both hazarded some explanatory conjectures. He was obstinately silent, because Mr. Crisparkle's manner directly appealed to him to take some part in the discussion, and no appeal would move his fixed face. When they drew near to the city, and it was suggested by the Minor Canon that they might do well in calling on the Mayor at once, he assented with a stern nod; but he spake no word until they stood in Mr. Sapsea's parlour.

Mr. Sapsea being informed by Mr. Crisparkle of the circumstances under which they desired to make a voluntary statement before him, Mr. Jasper broke silence by declaring that he placed his whole reliance, humanly speaking, on Mr. Sapsea's penetration. There was no conceivable reason why his nephew should have suddenly absconded, unless Mr. Sapsea could suggest one, and then he would defer. There was no intelligible likelihood of his having returned to the river, and been accidentally drowned in the dark, unless it should appear likely to Mr. Sapsea, and then again he would defer. He washed his hands as clean as he could of all horrible suspicions, unless it should appear to Mr. Sapsea that some such were inseparable from his last companion before his disappearance (not on good terms with previously), and then, once more, he would defer. His own state of mind, he being distracted with doubts, and labouring under dismal apprehensions, was not to be safely trusted; but Mr. Sapsea's was.

Mr. Sapsea expressed his opinion that the case had a dark look; in short (and here his eyes rested full on Neville's countenance), an un-English complexion. Having made this grand point, he wandered into a denser haze and maze of nonsense than even a mayor might have been expected to disport himself in, and came out of it with the brilliant discovery that to take the life of a fellow-creature was to take something that didn't belong to you. He wavered whether or no he should at once issue his warrant for the committal of Neville Landless to jail, under circumstances of grave suspicion; and he might have gone so far as to do it but for the indignant protest of the Minor Canon: who undertook for the young man's remaining in his own house, and being produced by his own hands, whenever demanded. Mr. Jasper then understood Mr. Sapsea to suggest that the river should be dragged, that its banks should be rigidly examined, that particulars of the disappearance should be sent to all out-lying places and to London, and that placards and advertisements should be widely circulated imploring Edwin Drood, if for any unknown reason he had withdrawn himself from his uncle's home and society, to take pity on that loving kinsman's sore bereavement and distress, and somehow inform him that he was yet alive. Mr. Sapsea was perfectly understood, for this was exactly his meaning (though he had said nothing about it); and measures were taken towards all these ends immediately.

It would be difficult to determine which was the more oppressed with horror and amazement: Neville Landless, or John Jasper. But that Jasper's position forced him to be active, while Neville's forced him to be passive, there would have been nothing to choose between them. Each was bowed down and broken.

With the earliest light of the next morning, men were at work upon the river, and other men—most of whom volunteered for the service —were examining the banks. All the livelong day the search went on; upon the river, with barge and pole, and drag and net; upon the muddy and rushy shore, with jack-boots, hatchet, spade, rope, dogs, and all imaginable appliances. Even at night, the river was specked with lanterns, and lurid with fires; far-off creeks, into which the tide washed as it changed, had their knots of watchers, listening to the lapping of the stream, and looking out for any burden it might bear; remote shingly causeways near the sea, and lonely points off which there was a race of water, had their unwonted flaring cressets and rough-coated figures when the next day dawned; but no trace of Edwin Drood revisited the light of the sun.

All that day, again, the search went on. Now, in barge and boat; and now ashore among the osiers, or tramping amidst mud and stakes and jagged stones in low-lying places where solitary watermarks and signals of strange shapes showed like spectres, John Jasper worked and toiled. But to no purpose; for still no trace of Edwin Drood revisited the light of the sun.

Setting his watches for that night again, so that vigilant eyes should be kept on every change of tide, he went home exhausted. Unkempt and disordered, bedaubed with mud that had dried upon him, and with much of his clothing torn to rags, he had but just dropped into his easy-chair, when Mr. Grewgious stood before him.

"This is strange news," said Mr. Grewgious.

"Strange and fearful news."

Jasper had merely lifted up his heavy eyes to say it, and now dropped them again as he dropped, worn out, over one side of his easy-chair.

Mr. Grewgious smoothed his head and face, and stood looking at the fire.

"How is your ward?" asked Jasper, after a time, in a faint, fatigued voice.

"Poor little thing! You may imagine her condition."

"Have you seen his sister?" inquired Jasper, as before.

"Whose?"

The curtness of the counter-question, and the cool slow manner in which, as he put it, Mr. Grewgious moved his eyes from the fire to his companion's face, might at any other time have been exasperating. In his depression and exhaustion, Jasper merely opened his eyes to say: "The suspected young man's."

"Do you suspect him?" asked Mr. Grewgious.

"I don't know what to think. I cannot make up my mind."

"Nor I," said Mr. Grewgious. "But as you spoke of him as the suspected young man, I thought you *had* made up your mind.—I have just left Miss Landless."

"What is her state?"

"Defiance of all suspicion, and unbounded faith in her brother."

"Poor thing!"

"However," pursued Mr. Grewgious, "it is not of her that I came to speak. It is of my ward. I have a communication to make that will surprise you. At least, it has surprised me."

Jasper, with a groaning sigh, turned wearily in his chair.

"Shall I put it off till to-morrow?" said Mr. Grewgious. "Mind, I warn you, that I think it will surprise you!"

More attention and concentration came into John Jasper's eyes as they caught sight of Mr. Grewgious smoothing his head again, and again looking at the fire; but now, with a compressed and determined mouth.

"What is it?" demanded Jasper, becoming upright in his chair.

"To be sure," said Mr. Grewgious, provokingly slowly and internally, as he kept his eyes on the fire: "I might have known it sooner; she gave me the opening; but I am such an exceedingly Angular man, that it never occurred to me, I took all for granted."

"What is it?" demanded Jasper once more.

Mr. Grewgious, alternately opening and shutting the palms of his hands as he warmed them at the fire, and looking fixedly at him sideways, and never changing either his action or his look in all that followed, went on to reply.

"This young couple, the lost youth and Miss Rosa, my ward, though so long betrothed, and so long recognising their betrothal, and so near being married——"

Mr. Grewgious saw a staring white face, and two quivering white lips, in the easy-chair, and saw two muddy hands gripping its sides. But for the hands, he might have thought he had never seen the face.

"—This young couple came gradually to the discovery (made on both sides pretty equally, I think), that they would be happier and better, both in their present and their future lives, as affectionate friends, or say rather as brother and sister, than as husband and wife."

Mr. Grewgious saw a lead-coloured face in the easy-chair, and on its surface dreadful starting drops or bubbles, as if of steel.

"This young couple formed at length the healthy resolution of interchanging their discoveries, openly, sensibly, and tenderly. They met for that purpose. After some innocent and generous talk, they agreed to dissolve their existing, and their intended, relations, for ever and ever."

Mr. Grewgious saw a ghastly figure rise, open-mouthed, from the easy-chair, and lift its outspread hands towards its head.

"One of this young couple, and that one your nephew, fearful, however, that in the tenderness of your affection for him you would be bitterly disappointed by so wide a departure from his projected life, forbore to tell you the secret, for a few days, and left it to be disclosed by me, when I should come down to speak to you, and he would be gone. I speak to you, and he is gone."

Mr. Grewgious saw the ghastly figure throw back its head, clutch its hair with its hands, and turn with a writhing action from him.

"I have now said all I have to say: except that this young couple parted, firmly, though not without tears and sorrow, on the evening when you last saw them together."

Mr. Grewgious heard a terrible shriek, and saw no ghastly figure, sitting or standing; saw nothing but a heap of torn and miry clothes upon the floor.

Not changing his action even then, he opened and shut the palms of his hands as he warmed them, and looked down at it.

CHAPTER XVI

DEVOTED

When John Jasper recovered from his fit or swoon, he found himself being tended by Mr. and Mrs. Tope, whom his visitor had summoned for the purpose. His visitor, wooden of aspect, sat stiffly in a chair, with his hands upon his knees, watching his recovery.

"There! You've come to nicely now, sir," said the tearful Mrs. Tope; "you were thoroughly worn out, and no wonder!"

"A man," said Mr. Grewgious, with his usual air of repeating a lesson, "cannot have his rest broken, and his mind cruelly tormented, and his body overtaxed by fatigue, without being thoroughly worn out."

"I fear I have alarmed you?" Jasper apologised faintly, when he was helped into his easy-chair.

"Not at all, I thank you," answered Mr. Grewgious.

"You are too considerate."

"Not at all, I thank you," answered Grewgious again.

"You must take some wine, sir," said Mrs. Tope, "and the jelly that I had ready for you, and that you wouldn't put your lips to at noon, though I warned you what would come of it, you know, and you not breakfasted; and you must have a wing of the roast fowl that has been put back twenty times if it's been put back once. It shall all be on table in five minutes, and this good gentleman belike will stop and see you take it."

This good gentleman replied with a snort, which might mean yes, or no, or anything or nothing, and which Mrs. Tope would have found highly mystifying, but that her attention was divided by the service of the table.

"You will take something with me?" said Jasper, as the cloth was laid.

"I couldn't get a morsel down my throat, I thank you," answered Mr. Grewgious.

Jasper both ate and drank almost voraciously. Combined with the hurry in his mode of doing it, was an evident indifference to the taste of what he took, suggesting that he ate and drank to fortify himself against any other failure of the spirits, far more than to gratify his palate. Mr. Grewgious in the meantime sat upright, with no expression in his face, and a hard kind of imperturbably polite protest all over him: as though he would have said, in reply to some invitation to discourse: "I couldn't originate the faintest approach to an observation on any subject whatever, I thank you."

"Do you know," said Jasper, when he had pushed away his plate and glass, and had sat meditating for a few minutes: "do you know that I find some crumbs of comfort in the communication with which you have so much amazed me?"

"*Do* you?" returned Mr. Grewgious, pretty plainly adding the unspoken clause: "I don't, I thank you!"

"After recovering from the shock of a piece of news of my dear boy, so entirely unexpected, and so destructive of all the castles I had built for him; and after having had time to think of it; yes."

"I shall be glad to pick up your crumbs," said Mr. Grewgious, dryly.

"Is there not, or is there—if I deceive myself, tell me so, and shorten my pain—is there not, or is there, hope that, finding himself in this new position, and becoming sensitively alive to the awkward burden of explanation, in this quarter, and that, and the other, with which it would load him, he avoided the awkwardness, and took to flight?"

"Such a thing might be," said Mr. Grewgious, pondering.

"Such a thing has been. I have read of cases in which people, rather than face a seven days' wonder, and have to account for themselves to the idle and impertinent, have taken themselves away, and been long unheard of."

"I believe such things have happened," said Mr. Grewgious, pondering still.

"When I had, and could have, no suspicion," pursued Jasper, eagerly following the new track, "that the dear lost boy had withheld anything from me—most of all, such a leading matter as this—what gleam of light was there for me in the whole black sky? When I supposed that his intended wife was here, and his marriage close at hand, how could I entertain the possibility of his voluntarily leaving this place, in a manner that would be so unaccountable, capricious, and cruel? But now that I know what you have told me, is there no little chink through which day pierces? Supposing him to have disappeared of his own act, is not his disappearance more accountable and less cruel? The fact of his having just parted from your ward, is in itself a sort of reason for his going away. It does not make his mysterious departure the less cruel to me, it is true; but it relieves it of cruelty to her."

Mr. Grewgious could not but assent to this.

"And even as to me," continued Jasper, still pursuing the new track, with ardour, and, as he did so, brightening with hope: "he knew that you were coming to me; he knew that you were intrusted to tell me what you have told me; if your doing so has awakened a new train of thought in my perplexed mind, it reasonably follows that, from the same premises, he might have foreseen the inferences that I should draw. Grant that he did foresee them; and even the cruelty to me—and who am I!—John Jasper, Music Master, vanishes!"—

Once more, Mr. Grewgious could not but assent to this.

"I have had my distrusts, and terrible distrusts they have been," said Jasper; "but your disclosure, overpowering as it was at first—showing me that my own dear boy had had a great disappointing reservation from me, who so fondly loved him, kindles hope within me. You do not extinguish it when I state it, but admit it to be a reasonable hope. I begin to believe it possible:" here he clasped his hands: "that he may have disappeared from among us of his own accord, and that he may yet be alive and well."

Mr. Crisparkle came in at the moment. To whom Mr. Jasper repeated:

"I begin to believe it possible that he may have disappeared of his own accord, and may yet be alive and well."

Mr. Crisparkle taking a seat, and inquiring: "Why so?" Mr. Jasper repeated the arguments he had just set forth. If they had been less plausible than they were, the good Minor Canon's mind would have been in a state of preparation to receive them, as exculpatory of his unfortunate pupil. But he, too, did really attach great importance to the lost young man's having been, so immediately before his disappearance, placed in a new and embarrassing relation towards every one acquainted with his projects and affairs; and the fact seemed to him to present the question in a new light.

"I stated to Mr. Sapsea, when we waited on him," said Jasper: as he really had done: "that there was no quarrel or difference between the two young men at their last meeting. We all know that their first meeting was unfortunately very far from amicable; but all went smoothly and quietly when they were last together at my house. My dear boy was not in his usual spirits; he was depressed—I noticed that—and I am bound henceforth to dwell upon the circumstance the more, now that I know there was a special reason for his being depressed: a reason, moreover, which may possibly have induced him to absent himself."

"I pray to Heaven it may turn out so!" exclaimed Mr. Crisparkle.

"*I* pray to Heaven it may turn out so!" repeated Jasper. "You know—and Mr. Grewgious should now know likewise—that I took a great prepossession against Mr. Neville Landless, arising out of his furious conduct on that first occasion. You know that I came to you, extremely apprehensive, on my dear boy's behalf, of his mad violence. You know that I even entered in my Diary, and showed the entry to you, that I had dark forebodings against him. Mr. Grewgious ought to be possessed of the whole case. He shall not, through any suppression of mine, be informed of a part of it, and kept in ignorance of another part of it. I wish him to be good enough to understand that the communication he has made to me has hopefully influenced my mind, in spite of its having been, before this mysterious occurrence took place, profoundly impressed against young Landless."

This fairness troubled the Minor Canon much. He felt that he was not as open in his own dealing. He charged against himself reproachfully that he had suppressed, so far, the two points of a second strong outbreak of temper against Edwin Drood on the part of Neville, and of the passion of jealousy having, to his own certain knowledge, flamed up in Neville's breast against him. He was convinced of Neville's innocence of any part in the ugly disappearance; and yet so many little circumstances combined so wofully against him, that he dreaded to add two more to their cumulative weight. He was among the truest of men; but he had been balancing in his mind, much to its distress, whether his volunteering to tell these two fragments of truth, at this time, would not be tantamount to a piecing together of falsehood in the place of truth.

However, here was a model before him. He hesitated no longer. Addressing Mr. Grewgious, as one placed in authority by the revelation he had brought to bear on the mystery (and surpassingly Angular Mr. Grewgious became when he found himself in that unexpected position), Mr. Crisparkle bore his testimony to Mr. Jasper's strict sense of justice, and, expressing his absolute confidence in the complete clearance of his pupil from the least taint of suspicion, sooner or later, avowed that his confidence in that young gentleman had been formed, in spite of his confidential knowledge that his temper was of the hottest and fiercest, and that it was directly incensed against Mr. Jasper's nephew, by the circumstance of his romantically supposing himself to be enamoured of the same young lady. The sanguine reaction manifest in Mr. Jasper was proof even against this unlooked-for declaration. It turned him paler; but he repeated that he would cling to the hope he had derived from Mr. Grewgious; and that if no trace of his dear boy were found, leading to the dreadful inference that he had been made away with, he would cherish unto the last stretch of possibility the idea, that he might have absconded of his own wild will.

Now, it fell out that Mr. Crisparkle, going away from this conference still very uneasy in his mind, and very much troubled on behalf of the young man whom he held as a kind of prisoner in his own house, took a memorable night walk.

He walked to Cloisterham Weir.

He often did so, and consequently there was nothing remarkable in his footsteps tending that way. But the preoccupation of his mind so hindered him from planning any walk, or taking heed of the objects he passed, that his first consciousness of being near the Weir was derived from the sound of the falling water close at hand.

"How did I come here!" was his first thought, as he stopped.

"Why did I come here!" was his second.

Then he stood intently listening to the water. A familiar passage in his reading, about airy tongues that syllable men's names, rose so unbidden to his ear, that he put it from him with his hand, as if it were tangible.

It was starlight. The Weir was full two miles above the spot to which the young man had repaired to watch the storm. No search had been made up here, for the tide had been running strongly down, at that time of the night of Christmas Eve, and the likeliest places for the discovery of a body, if a fatal accident had happened under such circumstances, all lay—both when the tide ebbed, and when it flowed again—between that spot and the sea. The water came over the Weir, with its usual sound on a cold starlight night, and little could be seen of it; yet Mr. Crisparkle had a strange idea that something unusual hung about the place.

He reasoned with himself: What was it? Where was it? Put it to the proof. Which sense did it address?

No sense reported anything unusual there. He listened again, and his sense of hearing again checked the water coming over the Weir, with its usual sound on a cold starlight night.

Knowing very well that the mystery with which his mind was occupied, might of itself give the place this haunted air, he strained those hawk's eyes of his for the correction of his sight. He got closer to the Weir, and peered at its well-known posts and timbers. Nothing in the least unusual was remotely shadowed forth. But he resolved that he would come back early in the morning.

The Weir ran through his broken sleep, all night, and he was back again at sunrise. It was a bright frosty morning. The whole composition before him, when he stood where he had stood last night, was clearly discernible in its minutest details. He had surveyed it closely for some minutes, and was about to withdraw his eyes, when they were attracted keenly to one spot.

He turned his back upon the Weir, and looked far away at the sky, and at the earth, and then looked again at that one spot. It caught his sight again immediately,and he concentrated his vision upon it. He could not lose it now, though it was but such a speck in the landscape. It fascinated his sight. His hands began plucking off his coat. For it struck him that at that spot—a corner of the Weir—something glistened, which did not move and come over with the glistening water-drops, but remained stationary.

He assured himself of this, he threw off his clothes, he plunged into the icy water, and swam for the spot. Climbing the timbers, he took from them, caught among their interstices by its chain, a gold watch, bearing engraved upon its back E. D.

He brought the watch to the bank, swam to the Weir again, climbed it, and dived off. He knew every hole and corner of all the depths, and dived and dived and dived until he could bear the cold no more. His notion was, that he would find the body; he only found a shirt-pin sticking in some mud and ooze.

With these discoveries he returned to Cloisterham, and, taking Neville Landless with him, went straight to the Mayor. Mr. Jasper was sent for, the watch and shirt-pin were identified, Neville was detained, and the wildest frenzy and fatuity of evil report rose against him. He was of that vindictive and violent nature, that but for his poor sister, who alone had influence over him, and out of whose sight he was never to be trusted, he would be in the daily commission of murder. Before coming to England he had caused to be whipped to death sundry "Natives"—nomadic persons, encamping now in Asia, now in Africa, now in the West Indies, and now at the North Pole—vaguely supposed in Cloisterham to be always black, always of great virtue, always calling themselves Me, and everybody else Massa or Missie (according to sex), and always reading tracts of the obscurest meaning, in broken English, but always accurately understanding them in the purest mother tongue. He had nearly brought Mrs. Crisparkle's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. (Those original expressions were Mr. Sapsea's.) He had repeatedly said he would have Mr. Crisparkle's life. He had repeatedly said he would have everybody's life, and become in effect the last man. He had been brought down to Cloisterham, from London, by an eminent Philanthropist, and why? Because that Philanthropist had expressly declared: "I owe it to my fellow-creatures that he should be, in the words of BENTHAM, where he is the cause of the greatest danger to the smallest number."

These dropping shots from the blunderbusses of blunderheadedness might not have hit him in a vital place. But he had to stand against a trained and well-directed fire of arms of precision too. He had notoriously threatened the lost young man, and had, according to the showing of his own faithful friend and tutor who strove so hard for him, a cause of bitter animosity (created by himself, and stated by himself), against that ill-starred fellow. He had armed himself with an offensive weapon for the fatal night, and he had gone off early in the morning, after making preparations for departure. He had been found with traces of blood on him; truly, they might have been wholly caused as he represented, but they might not, also. On a search-warrant being issued for the examination of his room, clothes, and so forth, it was discovered that he had destroyed all his papers, and rearranged all his possessions, on the very afternoon of the disappearance. The watch found at the Weir was challenged by the jeweller as one he had wound and set for Edwin Drood, at twenty minutes past two on that same afternoon; and it had run down before being cast into the water; and it was the jeweller's positive opinion that it had never been re-wound. This would justify the hypothesis that the watch was taken from him not long after he left Mr. Jasper's house at midnight, in company with the last person seen with him, and that it had been thrown away after being retained some hours. Why thrown away? If he had been murdered, and so artfully disfigured, or concealed, or both, as that the murderer hoped identification to be impossible, except from something that he wore, assuredly the murderer would seek to remove from the body the most lasting, the best known, and the most easily recognisable, things upon it. Those things would be the watch and shirt-pin. As to his opportunities of casting them into the river; if he were the object of these suspicions, they were easy. For, he had been seen by many persons, wandering about on that side of the city—indeed on all sides of it—in a miserable and seemingly half-distracted manner. As to the choice of the spot, obviously such criminating evidence had better take its chance of being found anywhere, rather than upon himself, or in his possession. Concerning the reconciliatory nature of the appointed meeting between the two young men, very little could be made of that in young Landless's favour; for it distinctly appeared that the meeting originated, not with him, but with Mr. Crisparkle, and that it had been urged on by Mr. Crisparkle; and who could say how unwillingly, or in what ill-conditioned mood, his enforced pupil had gone to it? The more his case was looked into, the weaker it became in every point. Even the broad suggestion that the lost young man had absconded, was rendered additionally improbable on the showing of the young lady from whom he had so lately parted; for, what did she say, with great earnestness and sorrow, when interrogated? That he had, expressly and enthusiastically, planned with her, that he would await the arrival of her guardian, Mr. Grewgious. And yet, be it observed, he disappeared before that gentleman appeared.

On the suspicions thus urged and supported, Neville was detained, and re-detained, and the search was pressed on every hand, and Jasper laboured night and day. But nothing more was found. No discovery being made, which proved the lost man to be dead, it at length became necessary to release the person suspected of having made away with him. Neville was set at large. Then, a consequence ensued which Mr. Crisparkle had too well foreseen. Neville must leave the place, for the place shunned him and cast him out. Even had it not been so, the dear old china shepherdess would have worried herself to death with fears for her son, and with general trepidation occasioned by their having such an inmate. Even had that not been so, the authority to which the Minor Canon deferred officially, would have settled the point.

"Mr. Crisparkle," quoth the Dean, "human justice may err, but it must act according to its lights. The days of taking sanctuary are past. This young man must not take sanctuary with us."

"You mean that he must leave my house, sir?"

"Mr. Crisparkle," returned the prudent Dean, "I claim no authority in your house. I merely confer with you, on the painful necessity you find yourself under, of depriving this young man of the great advantages of your counsel and instruction."

"It is very lamentable, sir," Mr. Crisparkle represented.

"Very much so," the Dean assented.

"And if it be a necessity——" Mr. Crisparkle faltered.

"As you unfortunately find it to be," returned the Dean.

Mr. Crisparkle bowed submissively: "It is hard to pre-judge his case, sir, but I am sensible that——"

"Just so. Perfectly. As you say, Mr. Crisparkle," interposed the Dean, nodding his head smoothly, "there is nothing else to be done. No doubt, no doubt. There is no alternative, as your good sense has discovered."

"I am entirely satisfied of his perfect innocence, sir, nevertheless."

"We-e-ell!" said the Dean, in a more confidential tone, and slightly glancing around him, "I would not say so, generally. Not generally. Enough of suspicion attaches to him to—no, I think I would not say so, generally."

Mr. Crisparkle bowed again.

"It does not become us, perhaps," pursued the Dean, "to be partisans. Not partisans. We clergy keep our hearts warm and our heads cool, and we hold a judicious middle course."

"I hope you do not object, sir, to my having stated in public, emphatically, that he will reappear here, whenever any new suspicion may be awakened, or any new circumstance may come to light in this extraordinary matter?"

"Not at all," returned the Dean. "And yet, do you know, I don't think," with a very nice and neat emphasis on those two words: "I *don't think* I would state it emphatically. State it? Ye-e-es! But emphatically? No-o-o. I *think* not. In point of fact, Mr. Crisparkle, keeping our hearts warm and our heads cool, we clergy need do nothing emphatically."

So Minor Canon Row knew Neville Landless no more; and he went whithersoever he would, or could, with a blight upon his name and fame.

It was not until then that John Jasper silently resumed his place in the choir. Haggard and red-eyed, his hopes plainly had deserted him, his sanguine mood was gone, and all his worst misgivings had come back. A day or two afterwards, while unrobing, he took his Diary from a pocket of his coat, turned the leaves, and with an impressive look, and without one spoken word, handed this entry to Mr. Crisparkle to read:

> "My dear boy is murdered. The discovery of the watch and shirt-pin convinces me that he was murdered that night, and that his jewellery was taken from him to prevent identification by its means. All the delusive hopes I had founded on his separation from his betrothed wife, I give to the winds. They perish before this fatal discovery. I now swear, and record the oath on this page, That I nevermore will discuss this mystery with any human creature until I hold the clue to it in my hand. That I never will relax in my secrecy or in my search. That I will fasten the crime of the murder of my dear dead boy upon the murderer. And, That I devote myself to his destruction."

CHAPTER XVII

PHILANTHROPY, PROFESSIONAL AND UNPROFESSIONAL

FULL half a year had come and gone, and Mr. Crisparkle sat in a waiting-room in the London chief offices of the Haven of Philanthropy, until he could have audience of Mr. Honeythunder.

In his college days of athletic exercises, Mr. Crisparkle had known professors of the Noble Art of fisticuffs, and had attended two or three of their gloved gatherings. He had now an opportunity of observing that as to the phrenological formation of the backs of their heads, the Professing Philanthropists were uncommonly like the Pugilists. In the development of all those organs which constitute, or attend, a propensity to "pitch into" your fellow-creatures, the Philanthropists were remarkably favoured. There were several Professors passing in and out, with exactly the aggressive air upon them of being ready for a turn-up with any Novice who might happen to be on hand, that Mr. Crisparkle well remembered in the circles of the Fancy. Preparations were in progress for a moral little Mill somewhere on the rural circuit, and other Professors were backing this or that Heavy-Weight as good for such or such speech-making hits, so very much after the manner of the sporting publicans, that the intended Resolutions might have been Rounds. In an official manager of these displays much celebrated for his platform tactics, Mr. Crisparkle recognised (in a suit of black) the counterpart of a deceased benefactor of his species, an eminent public character, once known to fame as Frosty-faced Fogo, who in days of yore superintended the formation of the magic circle with the ropes and stakes. There were only three conditions of resemblance wanting between these Professors and those. Firstly, the Philanthropists were in very bad training: much too fleshy, and presenting, both in face and figure, a superabundance of what is known to Pugilistic Experts as Suet Pudding. Secondly, the Philanthropists had not the good temper of the Pugilists, and used worse language. Thirdly, their fighting code stood in great need of revision, as empowering them not only to bore their man to the ropes, but to bore him to the confines of distraction; also to hit him when he was down, hit him anywhere and anyhow, kick him, stamp upon him, gouge him, and maul him behind his back without mercy. In these last particulars the Professors of the Noble Art were much nobler than the Professors of Philanthropy.

Mr. Crisparkle was so completely lost in musing on these similarities and dissimilarities, at the same time watching the crowd which came and went by, always, as it seemed, on errands of antagonistically snatching something from somebody, and never giving anything to anybody, that his name was called before he heard it. On his at length responding, he was shown by a miserably shabby and underpaid stipendiary Philanthropist (who could hardly have done worse if he had taken service with a declared enemy of the human race) to Mr. Honeythunder's room.

"Sir;" said Mr. Honeythunder, in his tremendous voice like a schoolmaster issuing orders to a boy of whom he had a bad opinion, "sit down."

Mr. Crisparkle seated himself.

Mr. Honeythunder having signed the remaining few score of a few thousand circulars, calling upon a corresponding number of families without means to come forward, stump up instantly, and be Philanthropists, or go to the Devil, another shabby stipendiary Philanthropist (highly disinterested, if in earnest) gathered these into a basket and walked off with them.

"Now, Mr. Crisparkle," said Mr. Honeythunder, turning his chair half round towards him when they were alone, and squaring his arms with his hands on his knees, and his brows knitted, as if he added, I am going to make short work of *you:* "Now, Mr. Crisparkle, we entertain different views, you and I, sir, of the sanctity of human life."

"Do we?" returned the Minor Canon.

"We do, sir."

"Might I ask you," said the Minor Canon: "what are your views on that subject?"

"That human life is a thing to be held sacred, sir."

"Might I ask you," pursued the Minor Canon as before: "what you suppose to be my views on that subject?"

"By George, sir!" returned the Philanthropist, squaring his arms still more, as he frowned on Mr. Crisparkle: "they are best known to yourself."

"Readily admitted. But you began by saying that we took different views, you know. Therefore (or you could not say so) you must have set up some views as mine. Pray, what views *have* you set up as mine?"

"Here is a man—and a young man," said Mr. Honeythunder, as if that made the matter infinitely worse, and he could have easily borne the loss of an old one, "swept off the face of the earth by a deed of violence. What do you call that?"

"Murder," said the Minor Canon.

"What do you call the doer of that deed, sir?"

"A murderer," said the Minor Canon.

"I am glad to hear you admit so much, sir," retorted Mr. Honeythunder, in his most offensive manner; "and I candidly tell you that I didn't expect it." Here he lowered heavily at Mr. Crisparkle again.

"Be so good as to explain what you mean by those very unjustifiable expressions."

"I don't sit here, sir," returned the Philanthropist, raising his voice to a roar, "to be browbeaten."

"As the only other person present, no one can possibly know that better than I do," returned the Minor Canon very quietly. "But I interrupt your explanation."

"Murder!" proceeded Mr. Honeythunder, in a kind of boisterous reverie, with his platform folding of his arms, and his platform nod of abhorrent reflection after each short sentiment of a word. "Bloodshed! Abel! Cain! I hold no terms with Cain. I repudiate with a shudder the red hand when it is offered me."

Instead of instantly leaping into his chair and cheering himself hoarse, as the Brotherhood in public meeting assembled would infallibly have done on this cue, Mr. Crisparkle merely reversed the quiet crossing of his legs and said mildly: "Don't let me interrupt your explanation—when you begin it."

"The Commandments say, no murder. NO murder, sir!" proceeded Mr. Honeythunder, platformally pausing as if he took Mr. Crisparkle to task for having distinctly asserted that they said: You may do a little murder, and then leave off.

"And they also say, you shall bear no false witness," observed Mr. Crisparkle.

"Enough!" bellowed Mr. Honeythunder, with solemnity and severity that would have brought the house down at a meeting. "E—e—nough! My late wards being now of age, and I being released from a trust which I cannot contemplate without a thrill of horror, there are the accounts which you have undertaken to accept on their behalf, and there is a statement of the balance which you have undertaken to receive, and which you cannot receive too soon. And let me tell you, sir, I wish that, as a man and a Minor Canon, you were better employed," with a nod. "Better employed," with another nod. "Bet—ter em—ployed!" with another and the three nods added up.

Mr. Crisparkle rose; a little heated in the face, but with perfect command of himself.

"Mr. Honeythunder," he said, taking up the papers referred to: "my being better or worse employed than I am at present is a matter of taste and opinion. You might think me better employed in enrolling myself a member of your Society."

"Ay, indeed, sir!" retorted Mr. Honeythunder, shaking his head in a threatening manner. "It would have been better for you if you had done that long ago!"

"I think otherwise."

"Or," said Mr. Honeythunder, shaking his head again, "I might think one of your profession better employed in devoting himself to the discovery and punishment of guilt than in leaving that duty to be undertaken by a layman."

"I may regard my profession from a point of view which teaches me that its first duty is towards those who are in necessity and tribulation, who are desolate and oppressed," said Mr. Crisparkle. "However, as I have quite clearly satisfied myself that it is no part of my profession to make professions, I say no more of that. But I owe it to Mr. Neville, and to Mr. Neville's sister (and in a much lower degree to myself), to say to you that I *know* I was in the full possession and understanding of Mr. Neville's mind and heart at the time of this occurrence; and that, without in the least colouring or concealing what was to be deplored in him and required to be corrected, I feel certain that his tale is true. Feeling that certainty, I befriend him. As long as that certainty shall last, I will befriend him. And if any consideration could shake me in this resolve, I should be so ashamed of myself for my meanness, that no man's good opinion—no, nor no woman's—so gained, could compensate me for the loss of my own."

Good fellow! Manly fellow! And he was so modest too. There was no more self-assertion in the Minor Canon than in the schoolboy who had stood in the breezy playing-fields keeping a wicket. He was simply and staunchly true to his duty alike in the large case and in the small. So all true souls ever are. So every true soul ever was, ever is, and ever will be. There is nothing little to the really great in spirit.

"Then who do you make out did the deed?" asked Mr. Honeythunder, turning on him abruptly.

"Heaven forbid," said Mr. Crisparkle, "that in my desire to clear one man I should lightly criminate another! I accuse no one."

"Tcha!" ejaculated Mr. Honeythunder with great disgust; for this was by no means the principle on which the Philanthropic Brotherhood usually proceeded. "And, sir, you are not a disinterested witness we must bear in mind."

"How am I an interested one?" inquired Mr. Crisparkle, smiling innocently, at a loss to imagine.

"There was a certain stipend, sir, paid to you for your pupil, which may have warped your judgment a bit," said Mr. Honeythunder, coarsely.

"Perhaps I expect to retain it still?" Mr. Crisparkle returned, enlightened; "do you mean that too?"

"Well, sir," returned the professional Philanthropist, getting up and thrusting his hands down into his trousers-pockets, "I don't go about measuring people for caps. If people find I have any about me that fit 'em, they can put 'em on and wear 'em, if they like. That's their look-out: not mine."

Mr. Crisparkle eyed him with a just indignation, and took him to task thus:

"Mr. Honeythunder, I hoped when I came in here that I might be under no necessity of commenting on the introduction of platform manners or platform manœuvres among the decent forbearances of private life. But you have given me such a specimen of both, that I should be a fit subject for both if I remained silent respecting them. They are detestable."

"They don't suit *you*, I dare say, sir."

"They are," repeated Mr. Crisparkle, without noticing the interruption, "detestable. They violate equally the justice that should belong to Christians, and the restraints that should belong to gentlemen. You assume a great crime to have been committed by one whom I, acquainted with the attendant circumstances, and having numerous reasons on my side, devoutly believe to be innocent of it. Because I differ from you on that vital point, what is your platform resource? Instantly to turn upon me, charging that I have no sense of the enormity of the crime itself, but am its aider and abettor! So, another time—taking me as representing your opponent in other cases—you set up a platform credulity; a moved and seconded and carried-unanimously profession of faith in some ridiculous delusion or mischievous imposition. I decline to believe it, and you fall back upon your platform resource of proclaiming that I believe nothing; that because I will not bow down to a false God of your making, I deny the true God! Another time you make the platform discovery that War is a calamity, and you propose to abolish it by a string of twisted resolutions tossed into the air like the tail of a kite. I do not admit the discovery to be yours in the least, and I have not a grain of faith in your remedy. Again, your platform resource of representing me as revelling in the horrors of a battle-field like a fiend incarnate! Another time, in another of your undiscriminating platform rushes, you would punish the sober for the drunken. I claim consideration for the comfort, convenience, and refreshment of the sober; and you presently make platform proclamation that I have a depraved desire to turn Heaven's creatures into swine and wild beasts! In all such cases your movers, and your seconders, and your supporters—your regular Professors of all degrees, run amuck like so many mad Malays; habitually attributing the lowest and basest motives with the utmost recklessness (let me call your attention to a recent instance in yourself for which you should blush), and quoting figures which you know to be as wilfully onesided as a statement of any complicated account that should be all Creditor side and no Debtor, or all Debtor side and no Creditor. Therefore it is, Mr. Honeythunder, that I consider the platform a sufficiently bad example and a sufficiently bad school, even in public life; but hold that, carried into private life, it becomes an unendurable nuisance."

"These are strong words, sir!" exclaimed the Philanthropist.

"I hope so," said Mr. Crisparkle. "Good morning."

He walked out of the Haven at a great rate, but soon fell into his regular brisk pace, and soon had a smile upon his face as he went along, wondering what the china shepherdess would have said if she had seen him pounding Mr. Honeythunder in the late little lively affair. For Mr. Crisparkle had just enough of harmless vanity to hope that he had hit hard, and to glow with the belief that he had trimmed the Philanthropist jacket pretty handsomely.

He took himself to Staple Inn, but not to P. J. T. and Mr. Grewgious. Full many a creaking stair he climbed before he reached some attic rooms in a corner, turned the latch of their unbolted door, and stood beside the table of Neville Landless.

An air of retreat and solitude hung about the rooms and about their inhabitant. He was much worn, and so were they. Their sloping ceilings, cumbrous rusty locks and grates, and heavy wooden bins and beams, slowly mouldering withal, had a prisonous look, and he had the haggard face of a prisoner. Yet the sunlight shone in at the ugly garret-window, which had a penthouse to itself thrust out among the tiles; and on the cracked and smoke-blackened parapet beyond, some of the deluded sparrows of the place rheumatically hopped, like little feathered cripples who had left their crutches in their nests; and there was a play of living leaves at hand that changed the air, and made an imperfect sort of music in it that would have been melody in the country.

The rooms were sparely furnished, but with good store of books. Everything expressed the abode of a poor student. That Mr. Crisparkle had been either chooser, lender, or donor of the books, or that he combined the three characters, might have been easily seen in the friendly beam of his eyes upon them as he entered.

"How goes it, Neville?"

"I am in good heart, Mr Crisparkle, and working away."

"I wish your eyes were not quite so large and not quite so bright," said the Minor Canon, slowly releasing the hand he had taken in his.

"They brighten at the sight of you," returned Neville. "If you were to fall away from me, they would soon be dull enough."

"Rally, rally!" urged the other, in a stimulating tone. "Fight for it, Neville!"

"If I were dying, I feel as if a word from you would rally me; if my pulse had stopped, I feel as if your touch would make it beat again," said Neville. "But I *have* rallied, and am doing famously."

Mr. Crisparkle turned him with his face a little more towards the light.

"I want to see a ruddier touch here, Neville," he said, indicating his own healthy cheek by way of pattern. "I want more sun to shine upon you."

Neville drooped suddenly, as he replied in a lowered voice: "I am not hardy enough for that, yet. I may become so, but I cannot bear it yet. If you had gone through those Cloisterham streets as I did; if you had seen, as I did, those averted eyes, and the better sort of people silently giving me too much room to pass, that I might not touch them or come near them, you wouldn't think it quite unreasonable that I cannot go about in the daylight."

"My poor fellow!" said the Minor Canon, in a tone so purely sympathetic that the young man caught his hand, "I never said it was unreasonable; never thought so. But I should like you to do it."

"And that would give me the strongest motive to do it. But I cannot yet. I cannot persuade myself that the eyes of even the stream of strangers I pass in this vast city look at me without suspicion. I feel marked and tainted, even when I go out—as I do only—at night. But the darkness covers me then, and I take courage from it."

Mr. Crisparkle laid a hand upon his shoulder, and stood looking down at him.

"If I could have changed my name," said Neville, "I would have done so. But as you wisely pointed out to me, I can't do that, for it would look like guilt. If I could have gone to some distant place, I might have found relief in that, but the thing is not to be thought of, for the same reason. Hiding and escaping would be the construction in either case. It seems a little hard to be so tied to a stake, and innocent; but I don't complain."

"And you must expect no miracle to help you, Neville," said Mr. Crisparkle, compassionately.

"No sir, I know that. The ordinary fulness of time and circumstances is all I have to trust to."

"It will right you at last, Neville."

"So I believe, and I hope I may live to know it."

But perceiving that the despondent mood into which he was falling cast a shadow on the Minor Canon, and (it may be) feeling that the broad hand upon his shoulder was not then quite as steady as its own natural strength had rendered it when it first touched him just now, he brightened and said:

"Excellent circumstances for study, anyhow! and you know, Mr. Crisparkle, what need I have of study in all ways. Not to mention that you have advised me to study for the difficult profession of the law, specially, and that of course I am guiding myself by the advice of such a friend and helper. Such a good friend and helper!"

He took the fortifying hand from his shoulder, and kissed it. Mr. Crisparkle beamed at the books, but not so brightly as when he had entered.

"I gather from your silence on the subject that my late guardian is adverse, Mr. Crisparkle?"

The Minor Canon answered: "Your late guardian is a—a most unreasonable person, and it signifies nothing to any reasonable person whether he is *ad*verse, or *per*verse, or the *re*verse."

"Well for me that I have enough with economy to live upon," sighed Neville, half wearily and half cheerily, "while I wait to be learned, and wait to be righted! Else I might have proved the proverb, that while the grass grows, the steed starves!"

He opened some books as he said it, and was soon immersed in their interleaved and annotated passages; while Mr. Crisparkle sat beside him, expounding, correcting, and advising. The Minor Canon's Cathedral duties made these visits of his difficult to accomplish, and only to be compassed at intervals of many weeks. But they were as serviceable as they were precious to Neville Landless.

When they had got through such studies as they had in hand, they stood leaning on the window-sill, and looking down upon the patch of garden. "Next week," said Mr. Crisparkle, "you will cease to be alone, and will have a devoted companion."

"And yet," returned Neville, "this seems an uncongenial place to bring my sister to."

"I don't think so," said the Minor Canon. "There is duty to be done here; and there are womanly feeling, sense, and courage wanted here."

"I meant," explained Neville, "that the surroundings are so dull and unwomanly, and that Helena can have no suitable friend or society here."

"You have only to remember," said Mr. Crisparkle, "that you are here yourself, and that she has to draw you into the sunlight."

They were silent for a little while, and then Mr. Crisparkle began anew.

"When we first spoke together, Neville, you told me that your sister had risen out of the disadvantages of your past lives as superior to you as the tower of Cloisterham Cathedral is higher than the chimneys of Minor Canon Corner. Do you remember that?"

"Right well!"

"I was inclined to think it at the time an enthusiastic flight. No matter what I think it now. What I would emphasise is, that under the head of Pride your sister is a great and opportune example to you."

"Under *all* heads that are included in the composition of a fine character, she is."

"Say so; but take this one. Your sister has learnt how to govern what is proud in her nature. She can dominate it even when it is wounded through her sympathy with you. No doubt she has suffered deeply in those same streets where you suffered deeply. No doubt her life is darkened by the cloud that darkens yours. But bending her pride into a grand composure that is not haughty or aggressive, but is a sustained confidence in you and in the truth, she has won her way through those streets until she passes along them as high in the general respect as any one who treads them. Every day and hour of her life since Edwin Drood's disappearance, she has faced malignity and folly—for you—as only a brave nature well directed can. So it will be with her to the end. Another and weaker kind of pride might sink broken-hearted, but never such a pride as hers: which knows no shrinking, and can get no mastery over her."

The pale cheek beside him flushed under the comparison, and the hint implied in it.

"I will do all I can to imitate her," said Neville.

"Do so, and be a truly brave man, as she is a truly brave woman," answered Mr. Crisparkle stoutly. "It is growing dark. Will you go my way with me, when it is quite dark? Mind! it is not I who wait for darkness."

Neville replied, that he would accompany him directly. But Mr. Crisparkle said he had a moment's call to make on Mr. Grewgious as an act of courtesy, and would run across to that gentleman's chambers, and rejoin Neville on his own doorstep, if he would come down there to meet him.

Mr. Grewgious, bolt upright us usual, sat taking his wine in the dusk at his open window; his wineglass and decanter on the round table at his elbow; himself and his legs on the window-seat; only one hinge in his whole body, like a bootjack.

"How do you do, reverend sir?" said Mr. Grewgious, with abundant offers of hospitality, which were as cordially declined as made. "And how is your charge getting on over the way in the set that I had the pleasure of recommending to you as vacant and eligible?"

Mr. Crisparkle replied suitably.

"I am glad you approve of them," said Mr. Grewgious, "because I entertain a sort of fancy for having him under my eye."

As Mr. Grewgious had to turn his eye up considerably before he could see the chambers, the phrase was to be taken figuratively and not literally.

"And how did you leave Mr. Jasper, reverend sir?" said Mr. Grewgious.

Mr. Crisparkle had left him pretty well.

"And where did you leave Mr. Jasper, reverend sir?"

Mr. Crisparkle had left him at Cloisterham.

"And when did you leave Mr. Jasper, reverend sir?"

That morning.

"Umps!" said Mr. Grewgious. "He didn't say he was coming, perhaps?"

"Coming where?"

"Anywhere, for instance?" said Mr. Grewgious.

"No."

"Because here he is," said Mr. Grewgious, who had asked all these questions, with his preoccupied glance directed out at window. "And he don't look agreeable, does he?"

Mr. Crisparkle was craning towards the window, when Mr. Grewgious added:

"If you will kindly step round here behind me, in the gloom of the room, and will cast your eye at the second-floor landing window in yonder house, I think you will hardly fail to see a slinking individual in whom I recognise our local friend."

"You are right!" cried Mr. Crisparkle.

"Umps!" said Mr. Grewgious. Then he added, turning his face so abruptly that his head nearly came into collision with Mr. Crisparkle's: "What should you say that our local friend was up to?"

The last passage he had been shown in the Diary returned on Mr. Crisparkle's mind with the force of a strong recoil, and he asked Mr. Grewgious if he thought it possible that Neville was to be harassed by the keeping of a watch upon him?

"A watch?" repeated Mr. Grewgious musingly. "Ay!"

"Which would not only of itself haunt and torture his life," said Mr. Crisparkle warmly, "but would expose him to the torment of a perpetually reviving suspicion, whatever he might do, or wherever he might go."

"Ay!" said Mr. Grewgious, musingly still. "Do I see him waiting for you?"

"No doubt you do."

"Then *would* you have the goodness to excuse my getting up to see you out, and to go out to join him, and to go the way that you were going, and to take no notice of our local friend?" said Mr. Grewgious. "I entertain a sort of fancy for having *him* under my eye to-night, do you know?"

Mr. Crisparkle, with a significant nod, complied; and rejoining Neville, went away with him. They dined together, and parted at the yet unfinished and undeveloped railway station: Mr. Crisparkle to get home: Neville to walk the streets, cross the bridges, make a wide round of the city in the friendly darkness, and tire himself out.

It was midnight when he returned from his solitary expedition and climbed his staircase. The night was hot, and the windows of the staircase were all wide open. Coming to the top, it gave him a passing chill of surprise (there being no rooms but his up there) to find a stranger sitting on the window-sill, more after the manner of a venturesome glazier than an amateur ordinarily careful of his neck; in fact, so much more outside the window than inside, as to suggest the thought that he must have come up by the water-spout instead of the stairs.

The stranger said nothing until Neville put his key in his door; then, seeming to make sure of his identity from the action, he spoke:

"I beg your pardon," he said, coming from the window with a frank and smiling air, and a prepossessing address; "the beans."

Neville was quite at a loss.

"Runners," said the visitor. "Scarlet. Next door at the back."

"O," returned Neville. "And the mignonette and wallflower?"

"The same," said the visitor.

"Pray walk in."

"Thank you."

Neville lighted his candles, and the visitor sat down. A handsome gentleman, with a young face, but with an older figure in its robustness and its breadth of shoulder; say a man of eight-and-twenty, or at the utmost thirty; so extremely sunburnt that the contrast between his brown visage and the white forehead shaded out of doors by his hat, and the glimpses of white throat below the neckerchief, would have been almost ludicrous but for his broad temples, bright blue eyes, clustering brown hair, and laughing teeth.

"I have noticed," said he; "—my name is Tartar."

Neville inclined his head.

"I have noticed (excuse me) that you shut yourself up a good deal, and that you seem to like my garden aloft here. If you would like a little more of it, I could throw out a few lines and stays between my windows and yours, which the runners would take to directly. And I have some boxes, both of mignonette and wallflower, that I could shove on along the gutter (with a boathook I have by me) to your windows, and draw back again when they wanted watering or gardening, and shove on again when they were shipshape; so that they would cause you no trouble. I couldn't take this liberty without asking your permission, so I venture to ask it. Tartar, corresponding set, next door."

"You are very kind."

"Not at all. I ought to apologise for looking in so late. But having noticed (excuse me) that you generally walk out at night, I thought I should inconvenience you least by awaiting your return. I am always afraid of inconveniencing busy men, being an idle man."

"I should not have thought so, from your appearance."

"No? I take it as a compliment. In fact, I was bred in the Royal Navy, and was First Lieutenant when I quitted it. But, an uncle disappointed in the service leaving me his property on condition that I left the Navy, I accepted the fortune, and resigned my commission."

"Lately, I presume?"

"Well, I had had twelve or fifteen years of knocking about first. I came here some nine months before you; I had had one crop before you came. I chose this place, because, having served last in a little corvette, I knew I should feel more at home where I had a constant opportunity of knocking my head against the ceiling. Besides, it would never do for a man who had been aboard ship from his boyhood to turn luxurious all at once. Besides, again; having been accustomed to a very short allowance of land all my life, I thought I'd feel my way to the command of a landed estate, by beginning in boxes."

Whimsically as this was said, there was a touch of merry earnestness in it that made it doubly whimsical.

"However," said the Lieutenant, "I have talked quite enough about myself. It is not my way, I hope; it has merely been to present myself to you naturally. If you will allow me to take the liberty I have described, it will be a charity, for it will give me something more to do. And you are not to suppose that it will entail any interruption or intrusion on you, for that is far from my intention."

Neville replied that he was greatly obliged, and that he thankfully accepted the kind proposal.

"I am very glad to take your windows in tow," said the Lieutenant. "From what I have seen of you when I have been gardening at mine, and you have been looking on, I have thought you (excuse me) rather too studious and delicate. May I ask, is your health at all affected?"

"I have undergone some mental distress," said Neville, confused, "which has stood me in the stead of illness."

"Pardon me" said Mr. Tartar.

With the greatest delicacy he shifted his ground to the windows again, and asked if he could look at one of them. On Neville's opening it, he immediately sprang out, as if he were going aloft with a whole watch in an emergency, and were setting a bright example.

"For Heaven's sake," cried Nevill, "don't do that! Where are you going, Mr. Tartar? You'll be dashed to pieces!"

"All well!" said the Lieutenant, coolly looking about him on the housetop. "All taut and trim here. Those lines and stays shall be rigged before you turn out in the morning. May I take this short cut home, and say good-night?"

"Mr. Tartar!" urged Neville. "Pray! It makes me giddy to see you!"

But Mr. Tartar, with a wave of his hand and the deftness of a cat, had already dipped through his scuttle of scarlet runners without breaking a leaf, and "gone below."

Mr. Grewgious, his bedroom window-blind held aside with his hand, happened at that moment to have Neville's chambers under his eye for the last time that night. Fortunately his eye was on the front of the house and not on the back, or this remarkable appearance and disappearance might have broken his rest as a phenomenon. But Mr. Grewgious seeing nothing there, not even a light in the windows, his gaze wandered from the windows to the stars, as if he would have read in them something that was hidden from him. Many of us would, if we could; but none of us so much as know our letters in the stars yet—or seem likely to do it in this state of existence—and few languages can be read until their alphabets are mastered.

CHAPTER XVIII

A SETTLER IN CLOISTERHAM

At about this time a stranger appeared in Cloisterham; a white-haired personage, with black eyebrows. Being buttoned up in a tightish blue surtout, with a buff waistcoat and gray trousers, he had something of a military air; but he announced himself at the Crozier (the orthodox hotel, where he put up with a portmanteau) as an idle dog who lived upon his means; and he further announced that he had a mind to take a lodging in the picturesque old city for a month or two, with a view of settling down there altogether. Both announcements were made in the coffee-room of the Crozier, to all whom it might or might not concern, by the stranger as he stood with his back to the empty fireplace, waiting for his fried sole, veal cutlet, and pint of sherry. And the waiter (business being chronically slack at the Crozier) represented all whom it might or might not concern, and absorbed the whole of the information.

This gentleman's white head was unusually large, and his shock of white hair was unusually thick and ample. "I suppose, waiter," he said, shaking his shock of hair, as a Newfoundland dog might shake his before sitting down to dinner, "that a fair lodging for a single buffer might be found in these parts, eh?"

The waiter had no doubt of it.

"Something old," said the gentleman. "Take my hat down for a moment from that peg, will you? No, I don't want it; look into it. What do you see written there?"

The waiter read: "Datchery."

"Now you know my name," said the gentleman; "Dick Datchery. Hang it up again. I was saying something old is what I should prefer, something odd and out of the way; something venerable, architectural, and inconvenient."

"We have a good choice of inconvenient lodgings in the town, sir, I think," replied the waiter, with modest confidence in its resources that way; "indeed, I have no doubt that we could suit you that far, however particular you might be. But a architectural lodging!" That seemed to trouble the waiter's head, and he shook it.

"Anything Cathedraly, now," Mr. Datchery suggested.

"Mr. Tope," said the waiter, brightening, as he rubbed his chin with his hand, "would be the likeliest party to inform in that line."

"Who is Mr. Tope?" inquired Dick Datchery.

The waiter explained that he was the Verger, and that Mrs. Tope had indeed once upon a time let lodgings herself or offered to let them; but that as nobody had ever taken them, Mrs. Tope's window-bill, long a Cloisterham Institution, had disappeared; probably had tumbled down one day, and never been put up again.

"I'll call on Mrs. Tope," said Mr. Datchery, "after dinner."

So when he had done his dinner, he was duly directed to the spot, and sallied out for it. But the Crozier being an hotel of a most retiring disposition, and the waiter's directions being fatally precise, he soon became bewildered, and went boggling about and about the Cathedral Tower, whenever he could catch a glimpse of it, with a general impression on his mind that Mrs. Tope's was somewhere very near it, and that, like the children in the game of hot boiled beans and very good butter, he was warm in his search when he saw the Tower, and cold when he didn't see it.

He was getting very cold indeed when he came upon a fragment of burial-ground in which an unhappy sheep was grazing. Unhappy, because a hideous small boy was stoning it through the railings, and had already lamed it in one leg, and was much excited by the benevolent sportsmanlike purpose of breaking its other three legs, and bringing it down.

"'It 'im agin!" cried the boy, as the poor creature leaped; "and made a dint in his wool."

"Let him be!" said Mr. Datchery. "Don't you see you have lamed him?"

"Yer lie," returned the sportsman. "'E went and lamed 'isself. I see 'im do it, and I give' 'im a shy as a Widdy-warning to 'im not to go a-bruisin' 'is master's mutton any more."

"Come here."

"I won't; I'll come when yer can ketch me."

"Stay there then, and show me which is Mr. Tope's."

"'Ow can I stay here and show you which is Topesses, when Topesses is t'other side the Kinfreederal, and over the crossings, and round ever so many corners? Stoo-pid! Ya-a-ah!"

"Show me where it is, and I'll give you something."

"Come on, then."

This brisk dialogue concluded, the boy led the way, and by and by stopped at some distance from an arched passage, pointing.

"Lookie yonder. You see that there winder and door?"

"That's Tope's?"

"Yer lie; it ain't. That's Jarsper's."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Datchery, with a second look of some interest.

"Yes, and I ain't a-goin' no nearer 'IM I tell yer."

"Why not?"

"'Cos I ain't a-goin' to be lifted off my legs and 'ave my braces bust and be choked; not if I knows it, and not by 'Im. Wait till I set a jolly good flint a-flying' at the back o' 'is jolly old 'ed some day! Now look t'other side the harch; not the side where Jarsper's door is; t'other side."

"I see."

"A little way in o' that side, there's a low door, down two steps.

"That's Topesses with 'is name on a hoval plate."

"Good. See here," said Mr. Datchery, producing a shilling. "You owe me half of this."

"Yer lie; I don't owe yer nothing; I never seen yer."

"I tell you you owe me half of this, because I have no sixpence in my pocket. So the next time you meet me you shall do something else for me, to pay me."

"All right, give us 'old."

"What is your name, and where do you live?"

"Deputy. Travellers' Twopenny, 'cross the green."

The boy instantly darted off with the shilling, lest Mr. Datchery should repent, but stopped at a safe distance, on the happy chance of his being uneasy in his mind about it, to goad him with a demon dance expressive of its irrevocability.

Mr. Datchery, taking off his hat to give that shock of white hair of his another shake, seemed quite resigned, and betook himself whither he had been directed.

Mr. Tope's official dwelling, communicating by an upper stair with Mr. Jasper's (hence Mrs. Tope's attendance on that gentleman), was of very modest proportions, and partook of the character of a cool dungeon. Its ancient walls were massive, and its rooms rather seemed to have been dug out of them, than to have been designed beforehand with any reference to them. The main door opened at once on a chamber of no describable shape, with a groined roof, which in its turn opened on another chamber of no describable shape, with another groined roof: their windows small, and in the thickness of the walls. These two chambers, close as to their atmosphere, and swarthy as to their illumination by natural light, were the apartments which Mrs. Tope had so long offered to an unappreciative city. Mr. Datchery, however, was more appreciative. He found that if he sat with the main door open he would enjoy the passing society of all comers to and fro by the gateway, and would have light enough. He found that if Mr. and Mrs. Tope, living overhead, used for their own egress and ingress a little side stair that came plump into the Precincts by a door opening outward, to the surprise and inconvenience of a limited public of pedestrians in a narrow way, he would be alone, as in a separate residence. He found the rent moderate, and everything as quaintly inconvenient as he could desire. He agreed, therefore, to take the lodging then and there, and money down, possession to be had next evening, on condition that reference was permitted him to Mr. Jasper as occupying the gatehouse, of which on the other side of the gateway, the Verger's hole-in-the wall was an appanage or subsidiary part.

The poor dear gentleman was very solitary and very sad, Mrs. Tope said, but she had no doubt he would " speak for her." Perhaps Mr. Datchery had heard something of what had occurred there last winter?

Mr. Datchery had as confused a knowledge of the event in question, on trying to recall it, as he well could have. He begged Mrs.

Tope's pardon when she found it incumbent on her to correct him in every detail of his summary of the facts, but pleaded that he was merely a single buffer getting through life upon his means as idly as he could, and that so many people were so constantly making away with so many other people, as to render it difficult for a buffer of an easy temper to preserve the circumstances of the several cases unmixed in his mind.

Mr. Jasper proving willing to speak for Mrs. Tope, Mr. Datchery, who had sent up his card, was invited to ascend the postern staircase. The Mayor was there, Mr. Tope said; but he was not to be regarded in the light of company, as he and Mr. Jasper were great friends.

"I beg pardon," said Mr. Datchery, making a leg with his hat under his arm, as he addressed himself equally to both gentlemen; "a selfish precaution on my part, and not personally interesting to anybody but myself. But as a buffer living on his means, and having an idea of doing it in this lovely place in peace and quiet, for remaining span of life, I beg to ask if the Tope family are quite respectable?"

Mr. Jasper could answer for that without the slightest hesitation.

"That is enough, sir," said Mr. Datchery.

"My friend the Mayor," added Mr. Jasper, presenting Mr. Datchery with a courtly motion of his hand towards that potentate; "whose recommendation is actually much more important to a stranger than that of an obscure person like myself, will testify in their behalf, I am sure."

"The Worshipful the Mayor," said Mr. Datchery, with a low bow, "places me under an infinite obligation."

"Very good people, sir, Mr. and Mrs. Tope," said Mr. Sapsea, with condescension. "Very good opinions. Very well behaved. Very respectful. Much approved by the Dean and Chapter."

"The Worshipful the Mayor gives them a character," said Mr. Datchery, "of which they may indeed be proud. I would ask His Honour (if I might be permitted) whether there are not many objects of great interest in the city which is under his beneficent sway?"

"We are, sir," returned Mr. Sapsea, "an ancient city, and an ecclesiastical city. We are a constitutional city, as it becomes such a city to be, and we uphold and maintain our glorious privileges."

"His Honour," said Mr. Datchery, bowing, "inspires me with a desire to know more of the city, and confirms me in my inclination to end my days in the city."

"Retired from the Army, sir?" suggested Mr. Sapsea.

"His Honour the Mayor does me too much credit," returned Mr. Datchery.

"Navy, sir?" suggested Mr. Sapsea.

"Again," repeated Mr. Datchery, "His Honour the Mayor does me too much credit."

"Diplomacy is a fine profession," said Mr. Sapsea, as a general remark.

"There, I confess, His Honour the Mayor is too many for me," said Mr. Datchery, with an ingenuous smile and bow; "even a diplomatic bird must fall to such a gun."

Now this was very soothing. Here was a gentleman of a great, not to say a grand, address, accustomed to rank and dignity, really setting a fine example how to behave to a Mayor. There was something in that third-person style of being spoken to, that Mr. Sapsea found particularly recognisant of his merits and position.

"But I crave pardon," said Mr. Datchery. "His Honour the Mayor will bear with me, if for a moment I have been deluded into occupying his time, and have forgotten the humble claims upon my own, of my hotel, the Crozier."

"Not at all, sir," said Mr. Sapsea. "I am returning home, and if you would like to take the exterior of our Cathedral in your way, I shall be glad to point it out."

"His Honour the Mayor," said Mr. Datchery, "is more than kind and gracious."

As Mr. Datchery, when he had made his acknowledgments to Mr. Jasper, could not be induced to go out of the room before the Worshipful, the Worshipful led the way downstairs; Mr. Datchery following with his hat under his arm, and his shock of white hair streaming in the evening breeze.

"Might I ask His Honour," said Mr. Datchery, "whether that gentleman we have just left is the gentleman of whom I have heard in the neighbourhood as being much afflicted by the loss of a nephew, and concentrating his life on avenging the loss?"

"That is the gentleman. John Jasper, sir."

"Would His Honour allow me to inquire whether there are strong suspicions of any one?"

"More than suspicions, sir," returned Mr. Sapsea; "all but certainties."

"Only think now!" cried Mr. Datchery.

"But proof, sir, proof must be built up stone by stone," said the Mayor. "As I say, the end crowns the work. It is not enough that Justice should be morally certain; she must be immorally certain—legally, that is."

"His Honour," said Mr. Datchery, "reminds me of the nature of the law. Immoral. How true!"

"As I say, sir," pompously went on the Mayor, "the arm of the law is a strong arm, and a long arm. That is the way I put it. A strong arm and a long arm."

"How forcible!—And yet, again, how true!" murmured Mr. Datchery.

"And without betraying what I call the secrets of the prison-house," said Mr. Sapsea; "the secrets of the prison-house is the term I used on the bench."

"And what other term than His Honour's would express it?" said Mr. Datchery.

"Without, I say, betraying them, I predict to you, knowing the iron will of the gentleman we have just left (I take the bold step of calling it iron, on account of its strength), that in this case the long arm will reach, and the strong arm will strike.—This is our Cathedral, sir. The best judges are pleased to admire it, and the best among our townsmen owe to being a little vain of it."

All this time Mr. Datchery had walked with his hat under his arm, and his white hair streaming. He had an odd momentary appearance upon him of having forgotten his hat, when Mr. Sapsea now touched it; and he clapped his hand up to his head as if with some vague expectation of finding another hat upon it.

"Pray be covered, sir," entreated Mr. Sapsea; magnificently implying: "I shall not mind it, I assure you."

"His Honour is very good, but I do it for coolness," said Mr. Datchery.

Then Mr. Datchery admired the Cathedral, and Mr. Sapsea pointed it out as if he himself had invented and built it: there were a few details indeed of which he did not approve, but those he glossed over, as if the workmen had made mistakes in his absence. The Cathedral disposed of, he led the way by the churchyard, and stopped to extol the beauty of the evening—by chance—in the immediate vicinity of Mrs. Sapsea's epitaph.

"And by the by," said Mr. Sapsea, appearing to descend from an elevation to remember it all of a sudden; like Apollo shooting down from Olympus to pick up his forgotten lyre; "*that* is one of our small lions. The partiality of our people has made it so, and strangers have been seen taking a copy of it now and then. I am not a judge of it myself, for it is a little work of my own. But it was troublesome to turn, sir; I may say, difficult to turn with elegance."

Mr. Datchery became so ecstatic over Mr. Sapsea's composition, that, in spite of his intention to end his days in Cloisterham, and therefore his probably having in reserve many opportunities of copying it, he would have transcribed it into his pocket-book on the spot, but for the slouching towards them of its material producer and perpetuator, Durdles, whom Mr. Sapsea hailed, not sorry to show him a bright example of behaviour to superiors.

"Ah, Durdles! This is the mason, sir; one of our Cloisterham worthies; everybody here knows Durdles. Mr. Datchery, Durdles; a gentleman who is going to settle here."

"I wouldn't do it if I was him," growled Durdles. "We're a heavy lot."

"You surely don't speak for yourself, Mr. Durdles," returned Mr. Datchery, "any more than for His Honour."

"Who's His Honour?" demanded Durdles.

"His Honour the Mayor."

"I never was brought afore him," said Durdles, with anything but the look of a loyal subject of the mayoralty, and it'll be time enough for me to Honour him when I am. Until which, and when, and where,

'Mister Sapsea is his name,
England is his nation,
Cloisterham's his dwelling-place,
Aukshneer's his occupation.' "

Here, Deputy (preceded by a flying oyster-shell) appeared upon the scene, and requested to have the sum of threepence instantly "chucked" to him by Mr. Durdles, whom he had been vainly seeking up and down, as lawful wages overdue. While that gentleman, with his bundle under his arm, slowly found and counted out the money, Mr. Sapsea informed the new settler of Durdles's habits, pursuits, abode, and reputation. "I suppose a curious stranger might come to see you, and your works, Mr. Durdles, at any odd time?" said Mr. Datchery upon that.

"Any gentleman is welcome to come and see me any evening if he brings liquor for two with him," returned Durdles, with a penny between his teeth and certain half-pence in his hands; "or if he likes to make it twice two, he'll be doubly welcome."

"I shall come. Master Deputy, what do you owe me?"

"A job."

"Mind you pay me honestly with the job of showing me Mr. Durdles's house when I want to go there."

Deputy, with a piercing broadside of whistle through the whole gap in his mouth, as a receipt in full for all arrears, vanished.

The Worshipful and the Worshipper then passed on together until they parted, with many ceremonies, at the Worshipful's door; even then the Worshipper carried his hat under his arm, and gave his streaming white hair to the breeze.

Said Mr. Datchery to himself that night, as he looked at his white hair in the gas-lighted looking-glass over the coffee-room chimney-piece at the Crozier, and shook it out: "For a single buffer, of an easy temper, living idly on his means, I have had a rather busy afternoon!"

CHAPTER XIX

SHADOW ON THE SUN-DIAL

Again Miss Twinkleton has delivered her valedictory address, with the accompaniments of white-wine and pound-cake, and again the young ladies have departed to their several homes. Helena Landless has left the Nuns' House to attend her brother's fortune, and pretty Rosa is alone.

Cloisterham is so bright and sunny in these summer days, that the Cathedral and the monastery-ruin show as if their strong walls were transparent. A soft glow seems to shine from within them, rather than upon them from without, such is their mellowness as they look forth on the hot cornfields and the smoking roads that distantly wind among them. The Cloisterham gardens blush with ripening fruit. Time was when travel-stained pilgrims rode in clattering parties through the city's welcome shades; time is when wayfarers, leading a gipsy life between haymaking time and harvest, and looking as if they were just made of the dust of the earth, so very dusty are they, lounge about on cool doorsteps, trying to mend their unmendable shoes, or giving them to the city kennels as a hopeless job, and seeking others in the bundles that they carry, along with their yet unused sickles swathed in bands of straw. At all the more public pumps there is much cooling of bare feet, together with much bubbling and gurgling of drinking with hand to spout on the part of these Bedouins; the Cloisterham police meanwhile looking askant from their beats with suspicion, and manifest impatience that the intruders should depart from within the civic bounds, and once more fry themselves on the simmering high-roads.

On the afternoon of such a day, when the last Cathedral service is done, and when that side of the High Street on which the Nuns' House stands is in grateful shade, save where its quaint old garden opens to the west between the boughs of trees, a servant informs Rosa, to her terror, that Mr. Jasper desires to see her.

If he had chosen his time for finding her at a disadvantage, he could have done no better. Perhaps he has chosen it. Helena Landless is gone, Mrs. Tisher is absent on leave, Miss Twinkleton (in her amateur state of existence) has contributed herself and a veal pie to a picnic.

"O why, why, why, did you say I was at home!" cried Rosa, helplessly.

The maid replies, that Mr. Jasper never asked the question. That he said he knew she was at home, and begged she might be told that he asked to see her.

"What shall I do! what shall I do!" thinks Rosa, clasping her hands.

Possessed by a kind of desperation, she adds in the next breath, that she will come to Mr. Jasper in the garden. She shudders at the thought of being shut up with him in the house; but many of its windows command the garden, and she can be seen as well as heard there, and can shriek in the free air and run away. Such is the wild idea that flutters through her mind.

She has never seen him since the fatal night, except when she was questioned before the Mayor, and then he was present in gloomy watchfulness, as representing his lost nephew and burning to avenge him. She hangs her garden-hat on her arm, and goes out. The moment she sees him from the porch, leaning on the sun-dial, the old horrible feeling of being compelled by him, asserts its hold upon her. She feels that she would even then go back, but that he draws her feet towards him. She cannot resist, and sits down, with her head bent, on the garden-seat beside the sun-dial. She cannot look up at him for abhorrence, but she has perceived that he is dressed in deep mourning. So is she. It was not so at first; but the lost has long been given up, and mourned for, as dead.

He would begin by touching her hand. She feels the intention, and draws her hand back. His eyes are then fixed upon her, she knows, though her own see nothing but the grass.

"I have been waiting," he begins, "for some time, to be summoned back to my duty near you."

After several times forming her lips, which she knows he is closely watching, into the shape of some other hesitating reply, and then into none, she answers: "Duty, sir?"

"The duty of teaching you, serving you as your faithful music-master."

"I have left off that study."

"Not left off, I think. Discontinued. I was told by your guardian that you discontinued it under the shock that we have all felt so acutely. When will you resume?"

"Never, sir."

"Never? You could have done no more if you had loved my dear boy."

"I did love him!" cried Rosa, with a flash of anger.

"Yes; but not quite—not quite in the right way, shall I say? Not in the intended and expected way. Much as my dear boy was, unhappily, too self-conscious and self-satisfied (I'll draw no parallel between him and you in that respect) to love as he should have loved, or as any one in his place would have loved—must have loved!"

She sits in the same still attitude, but shrinking a little more.

"Then, to be told that you discontinued your study with me, was to be politely told that you abandoned it altogether?" he suggested.

"Yes," says Rosa, with sudden spirit. "The politeness was my guardian's, not mine. I told him that I was resolved to leave off, and that I was determined to stand by my resolution."

"And you still are?"

"I still am, sir. And I beg not to be questioned any more about it. At all events, I will not answer any more; I have that in my power."

She is so conscious of his looking at her with a gloating admiration of the touch of anger on her, and the fire and animation it brings with it, that even as her spirit rises, it falls again, and she struggles with a sense of shame, affront, and fear, much as she did that night at the piano.

"I will not question you any more, since you object to it so much; I will confess——"

"I do not wish to hear you, sir," cries Rosa, rising.

This time he does touch her with his outstretched hand. In shrinking from it, she shrinks into her seat again.

"We must sometimes act in opposition to our wishes," he tells her in a low voice. "You must do so now, or do more harm to others than you can ever set right."

"What harm?"

"Presently, presently. You question *me*, you see, and surely that's not fair when you forbid me to question you. Nevertheless, I will answer the question presently. Dearest Rosa! Charming Rosa!"

She starts up again.

This time he does not touch her. But his face looks so wicked and menacing, as he stands leaning against the sun-dial—setting, as it were, his black mark upon the very face of day—that her flight is arrested by horror as she looks at him.

"I do not forget how many windows command a view of us," he says, glancing towards them. "I will not touch you again; I will come no nearer to you than I am. Sit down, and there will be no mighty wonder in your music-master's leaning idly against a pedestal and speaking with you, remembering all that has happened, and our shares in it. Sit down, my beloved."

She would have gone once more—was all but gone—and once more his face, darkly threatening what would follow if she went, has stopped her. Looking at him with the expression of the instant frozen on her face, she sits down on the seat again.

"Rosa, even when my dear boy was affianced to you, I loved you madly; even when I thought his happiness in having you for his wife was certain, I loved you madly; even when I strove to make him more ardently devoted to you, I loved you madly; even when he gave me the picture of your lovely face so carelessly traduced by him, which I feigned to hang always in my sight for his sake, but worshipped in torment for years, I loved you madly; in the distasteful work of the day, in the wakeful misery of the night, girded by sordid realities, or wandering through Paradises and Hells of visions into which I rushed, carrying your image in my arms, I loved you madly."

If anything could make his words more hideous to her than they are in themselves, it would be the contrast between the violence of his look and delivery, and the composure of his assumed attitude.

"I endured it all in silence. So long as you were his, or so long as I supposed you to be his, I hid my secret loyally. Did I not!"

This lie, so gross,while the mere words in which it is told are so true, is more than Rosa can endure. She answers with kindling indignation: "You were as false throughout, sir, as you are now. You were false to him, daily and hourly. You know that you made my life unhappy by your pursuit of me. You know that you made me afraid to open his generous eyes, and that you forced me, for his own trusting good, good sake, to keep the truth from him, that you were a bad, bad man!"

His preservation of his easy attitude rendering his working features and his convulsive hands absolutely diabolical, he returns, with a fierce extreme of admiration:

"How beautiful you are! You are more beautiful in anger than in repose. I don't ask you for your love; give me yourself and your hatred; give me yourself and that pretty rage; give me yourself and that enchanting scorn; it will be enough for me."

Impatient tears rise to the eyes of the trembling little beauty, and her face flames; but as she again rises to leave him in indignation, and seek protection within the house, he stretches out his hand towards the porch, as though he invited her to enter it.

"I told you, you rare charmer, you sweet witch, that you must stay and hear me, or do more harm than can ever be undone. You asked me what harm. Stay, and I will tell you. Go, and I will do it!"

Again Rosa quails before his threatening face, though innocent of its meaning, and she remains. Her panting breathing comes and goes as if it would choke her; but with a repressive hand upon her bosom, she remains.

"I have made my confession that my love is mad. It is so mad, that had the ties between me and my dear lost boy been one silken thread less strong, I might have swept even him from your side when you favoured him."

A film comes over the eyes she raises for an instant, as though he had turned her faint.

"Even him," he repeats. "Yes, even him! Rosa, you see me and you hear me. Judge for yourself whether any other admirer shall love you and live, whose life is in my hand."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I mean to show you how mad my love is. It was hawked through the late inquiries by Mr. Crisparkle, that young Landless had confessed to him that he was a rival of my lost boy. That is an inexpiable offence in my eyes. The same Mr. Crisparkle knows under my hand that I have devoted myself to the murderer's discovery and destruction, be he whom he might, and that I determined to discuss the mystery with no one until I should hold the clue in which to entangle the murderer as in a net. I have since worked patiently to wind and wind it round him; and it is slowly winding as I speak."

"Your belief, if you believe in the criminality of Mr. Landless, is not Mr. Crisparkle's belief, and he is a good man," Rosa retorts.

"My belief is my own; and I reserve it, worshipped of my soul! Circumstances may accumulate so strongly *even against an innocent man*, that directed, sharpened, and pointed, they may slay him. One wanting link discovered by perseverance against a guilty man, proves his guilt, however slight its evidence before, and he dies. Young Landless stands in deadly peril either way."

"If you really suppose," Rosa pleads with him, turning paler, "that I favour Mr. Landless, or that Mr. Landless has ever in any way addressed himself to me, you are wrong."

He puts that from him with a slighting action of his hand and a curled lip.

"I was going to show you how madly I love you. More madly now than ever, for I am willing to renounce the second object that has arisen in my life to divide it with you; and henceforth to have no object in existence but you only. Miss Landless has become your bosom friend. You are for her peace of mind?"

"I love her dearly."

"You care for her good name?"

"I have said, sir, I love her dearly."

"I am unconsciously," he observes with a smile, as he folds his hands upon the sun-dial and leans his chin upon them, so that his talk would seem from the windows (faces occasionally come and go there) to be the airiest and playfullest—"I am unconsciously giving offence by questioning again. I will simply make statements, therefore, and not put questions. You do care for your bosom friend's good name, and you do care for her peace of mind. Then remove the shadow of the gallows from her, dear one!"

"You dare propose to me to——"

"Darling, I dare propose to you. Stop there. If it be bad to idolise you, I am the worst of men; if it be good, I am the best. My love for you is above all other love, and my truth to you is above all other truth. Let me have hope and favour, and I am a forsworn man for your sake."

Rosa puts her hands to her temples, and, pushing back her hair, looks wildly and abhorrently at him, as though she were trying to piece together what it is his deep purpose to present to her only in fragments.

"Reckon up nothing at this moment, angel, but the sacrifices that I lay at those dear feet, which I could fall down among the vilest ashes and kiss, and put upon my head as a poor savage might. There is my fidelity to my dear boy after death. Tread upon it!"

With an action of his hands, as though he cast down something precious.

"There is the inexpiable offence against my adoration of you. Spurn it!"

With a similar action.

"There are my labours in the cause of a just vengeance for six

Jasper's Sacrifices

toiling months. Crush them!"

With another repetition of the action.

"There is my past and my present wasted life. There is the desolation of my heart and my soul. There is my peace; there is my despair. Stamp them into the dust; so that you take me, were it even mortally hating me!"

The frightful vehemence of the man, now reaching its full height, so additionally terrifies her as to break the spell that has held her to the spot. She swiftly moves towards the porch; but in an instant he is at her side, and speaking in her ear.

"Rosa, I am self-repressed again. I am walking calmly beside you to the house. I shall wait for some encouragement and hope. I shall not strike too soon. Give me a sign that you attend to me."

She slightly and constrainedly moves her hand.

"Not a word of this to any one, or it will bring down the blow, as certainly as night follows day. Another sign that you attend to me."

She moves her hand once more.

"I love you, love you, love you! If you were to cast me off now—but you will not—you would never be rid of me. No one should come between us. I would pursue you to the death."

The handmaid coming out to open the gate for him, he quietly pulls off his hat as a parting salute, and goes away with no greater show of agitation than is visible in the effigy of Mr. Sapsea's father opposite. Rosa faints in going upstairs, and is carefully carried to her room and laid down on her bed. A thunderstorm is coming on, the maids say, and the hot and stifling air has overset the pretty dear: no wonder; they have felt their own knees all of a tremble all day long.

CHAPTER XX

A FLIGHT

Rosa no sooner came to herself than the whole of the late interview was before her. It even seemed as if it had pursued her into her insensibility, and she had not had a moment's unconsciousness of it. What to do, she was at a frightened loss to know: the only one clear thought in her mind was, that she must fly from this terrible man.

But where could she take refuge, and how could she go? She had never breathed her dread of him to any one but Helena. If she went to Helena, and told her what had passed, that very act might bring down the irreparable mischief that he threatened he had the power, and that she knew he had the will, to do. The more fearful he appeared to her excited memory and imagination, the more alarming her responsibility appeared; seeing that a slight mistake on her part, either in action or delay, might let his malevolence loose on Helena's brother.

Rosa's mind throughout the last six months had been stormily confused. A half-formed, wholly unexpressed suspicion tossed in it, now heaving itself up, and now sinking into the deep; now gaining palpability, and now losing it. Jasper's self-absorption in his nephew when he was alive, and his unceasing pursuit of the inquiry how he came by his death, if he were dead, were themes so rife in the place, that no one appeared able to suspect the possibility of foul play at his hands. She had asked herself the question, "Am I so wicked in my thoughts as to conceive a wickedness that others cannot imagine?" Then she had considered, Did the suspicion come of her previous recoiling from him before the fact? And if so, was not that a proof of its baselessness? Then she had reflected, "What motive could he have, according to my accusation?" She was ashamed to answer in her mind, "The motive of gaining *me!*" And covered her face, as if the lightest shadow of the idea of founding murder on such an idle vanity were a crime almost as great.

She ran over in her mind again, all that he had said by the sun-dial in the garden. He had persisted in treating the disappearance as murder, consistently with his whole public course since the finding of the watch and shirt-pin. If he were afraid of the crime being traced out, would he not rather encourage the idea of a voluntary disappearance? He had even declared that if the ties between him and his nephew had been less strong, he might have swept "even him" away from her side. Was that like his having really done so? He had spoken of laying his six months' labours in the cause of a just vengeance at her feet. Would he have done that, with that violence of passion, if they were pretence? Would he have ranged them with his desolate heart and soul, his wasted life, his peace and his despair? The very first sacrifice that he represented himself as making for her was his fidelity to his dear boy after death. Surely these facts were strong against a fancy that scarcely dared to hint itself. And yet he was so terrible a man! In short, the poor girl (for what could she know of the criminal intellect, which its own professed students perpetually misread, because they persist in trying to reconcile it with the average intellect of average men, instead of identifying it as a horrible wonder apart) could get by no road to any other conclusion than that he *was* a terrible man, and must be fled from.

She had been Helena's stay and comfort during the whole time. She had constantly assured her of her full belief in her brother's innocence, and of her sympathy with him in his misery. But she had never seen him since the disappearance, nor had Helena ever spoken one word of his avowal to Mr. Crisparkle in regard of Rosa, though as a part of the interest of the case it was well known far and wide. He was Helena's unfortunate brother, to her, and nothing more. The assurance she had given her odious suitor was strictly true, though it would have been better (she considered now) if she could have restrained herself from so giving it. Afraid of him as the bright and delicate little creature was, her spirit swelled at the thought of his knowing it from her own lips.

But where was she to go? Anywhere beyond his reach, was no reply to the question. Somewhere must be thought of. She determined to go to her guardian, and to go immediately. The feeling she had imparted to Helena on the night of their first confidence, was so strong upon her—the feeling of not being safe from him, and the solid walls of the old convent being powerless to keep out his ghostly following of her—that no reasoning of her own could calm her terrors. The fascination of repulsion had been upon her so long, and now culminated so darkly, that she felt as if he had power to bind her by a spell. Glancing out at window, even now, as she rose to dress, the sight of the sun-dial on which he had leaned when he declared himself, turned her cold, and made her shrink from it, as though he had invested it with some awful quality from his own nature.

She wrote a hurried note to Miss Twinkleton, saying that she had sudden reason for wishing to see her guardian promptly, and had gone to him; also, entreating the good lady not to be uneasy, for all was well with her. She hurried a few quite useless articles into a very little bag, left the note in a conspicuous place, and went out, softly closing the gate after her.

It was the first time she had ever been in Cloisterham High Street alone. But knowing all its ways and windings very well, she hurried straight to the corner from which the omnibus departed. It was, at that very moment, going off.

"Stop and take me, if you please, Joe. I am obliged to go to London."

In less than another minute she was on her road to the railway, under Joe's protection. Joe waited on her when she got there, put her safely into the railway carriage, and handed in the very little bag after her, as though it were some enormous trunk, hundredweights heavy, which she must on no account endeavour to lift.

"Can you go round when you get back, and tell Miss Twinkleton that you saw me safely off, Joe?"

"It shall be done, Miss."

"With my love, please, Joe."

"Yes, Miss—and I wouldn't mind having it myself!" But Joe did not articulate the last clause; only thought it.

Now that she was whirling away for London in real earnest, Rosa was at leisure to resume the thoughts which her personal hurry had checked. The indignant thought that his declaration of love soiled her; that she could only be cleansed from the stain of its impurity by appealing to the honest and true; supported her for a time against her fears, and confirmed her in her hasty resolution. But as the evening grew darker and darker, and the great city impended nearer and nearer, the doubts usual in such cases began to rise. Whether this was not a wild proceeding, after all; how Mr. Grewgious might regard it; whether she should find him at the journey's end; how she would act if he were absent; what might become of her, alone, in a place so strange and crowded; how if she had but waited and taken counsel first; whether, if she could now go back, she would not do it thankfully; a multitude of such uneasy speculations disturbed her, more and more as they accumulated. At length the train came into London over the house-tops; and down below lay the gritty streets with their yet un-needed lamps a-glow, on a hot light summer night.

"Hiram Grewgious, Esquire, Staple Inn, London." This was all Rosa knew of her destination; but it was enough to send her rattling away again in a cab, through deserts of gritty streets, where many people crowded at the corner of courts and byways to get some air, and where many other people walked with a miserably monotonous noise of shuffling of feet on hot paving-stones, and where all the people and all their surroundings were so gritty and so shabby!

There was music playing here and there, but it did not enliven the case. No barrel-organ mended the matter, and no big drum beat dull care away. Like the chapel bells that were also going here and there, they only seemed to evoke echoes from brick surfaces, and dust from everything. As to the flat wind-instruments, they seemed to have cracked their hearts and souls in pining for the country.

Her jingling conveyance stopped at last at a fast-closed gateway, which appeared to belong to somebody who had gone to bed very early, and was much afraid of house-breakers; Rosa, discharging her conveyance, timidly knocked at this gateway, and was let in, very little bag and all, by a watchman.

"Does Mr. Grewgious live here?"

"Mr. Grewgious lives there, Miss," said the watchman, pointing further in.

So Rosa went further in, and, when the clocks were striking ten, stood on P. J. T.'s doorsteps, wondering what P. J. T. had done with his street-door.

Guided by the painted name of Mr. Grewgious, she went up-stairs and softly tapped and tapped several times. But no one answering, and Mr. Grewgious's door-handle yielding to her touch, she went in, and saw her guardian sitting on a window-seat at an open window, with a shaded lamp placed far from him on a table in a corner.

Rosa drew nearer to him in the twilight of the room. He saw her, and he said, in an undertone: "Good Heaven!"

Rosa fell upon his neck, with tears, and then he said, returning her embrace.

"My child, my child! I thought you were your mother!—But what, what, what," he added, soothingly, "has happened? My dear, what has brought you here? Who has brought you here?"

"No one. I came alone."

"Lord bless me!" ejaculated Mr. Grewgious. "Came alone! Why didn't you write to me to come and fetch you?"

"I had no time. I took a sudden resolution. Poor, poor Eddy!"

"Ah, poor fellow, poor fellow!"

"His uncle has made love to me. I cannot bear it," said Rosa, at once with a burst of tears, and a stamp of her little foot; "I shudder with horror of him, and I have come to you to protect me and all of us from him, if you will?"

"I will," cried Mr. Grewgious, with a sudden rush of amazing energy. "Damn him!

'Confound his politics!
Frustrate his knavish tricks!
On Thee his hopes to fix?
Damn him again!'"

After this most extraordinary outburst, Mr. Grewgious, quite beside himself, plunged about the room, to all appearance undecided whether he was in a fit of loyal enthusiasm, or combative denunciation.

He stopped and said, wiping his face: "I beg your pardon, my dear, but you will be glad to know I feel better. Tell me no more just now, or I might do it again. You must be refreshed and cheered. What did you take last? Was it breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, or supper? And what will you take next? Shall it be breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea, or supper?"

The respectful tenderness with which, on one knee before her, he helped her to remove her hat, and disentangle her pretty hair from it, was quite a chivalrous sight. Yet who, knowing him only on the surface, would have expected chivalry—and of the true sort, too; not the spurious—from Mr. Grewgious?

"Your rest too must be provided for," he went on; "and you shall have the prettiest chamber in Furnival's. Your toilet must be provided for, and you shall have everything that an unlimited head chambermaid—by which expression I mean a head chambermaid not limited as to outlay—can procure. Is that a bag?" he looked hard at it; sooth to say, it required hard looking at to be seen at all in a dimly lighted room: "and is it your property, my dear?"

"Yes, sir. I brought it with me."

"It is not an extensive bag," said Mr. Grewgious, candidly. "though admirably calculated to contain a day's provision for a canary-bird. Perhaps you brought a canary-bird?"

Rosa smiled and shook her head.

"If you had, he should have been made welcome," said Mr. Grewgious, "and I think he would have been pleased to be hung upon a nail outside and pit himself against our Staple sparrows; whose execution must be admitted to be not quite equal to their intention. Which is the case with so many of us! You didn't say what meal, my dear. Have a nice jumble of all meals."

Rosa thanked him, but said she could only take a cup of tea. Mr. Grewgious, after several times running out, and in again, to mention such supplementary items as marmalade, eggs, watercresses, salted fish, and frizzled ham, ran across to Furnival's without his hat, to give his various directions. And soon afterwards they were realised in practice, and the board was spread.

"Lord bless my soul," cried Mr. Grewgious, putting the lamp upon it, and taking his seat opposite Rosa; "what a new sensation for a poor old Angular bachelor, to be sure!"

Rosa's expressive little eyebrows asked him what he meant?

"The sensation of having a sweet young presence in the place, that whitewashes it, paints it, papers it, decorates it with gilding, and makes if Glorious!" said Mr. Grewgious. "Ah me! Ah me!"

As there was something mournful in his sigh, Rosa, in touching him with her tea-cup, ventured to touch him with her small hand too.

"Thank you, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious. "Ahem! Let's talk!"

"Do you always live here, sir?" asked Rosa.

"Yes, my dear."

"And always alone?"

"Always alone; except that I have daily company in a gentleman by the name of Bazzard, my clerk."

"*He* doesn't live here?"

"No, he goes his way, after office hours. In fact, he is off duty here, altogether, just at present; and a firm down-stairs, with which I have business relations, lend me a substitute. But it would be extremely difficult to replace Mr. Bazzard."

"He must be very fond of you," said Rosa.

"He bears up against it with commendable fortitude if he is," returned Mr. Grewgious, after considering the matter. "But I doubt if he is. Not particularly so. You see, he is discontented, poor fellow."

"Why isn't he contented?" was the natural inquiry.

"Misplaced," said Mr. Grewgious, with great mystery.

Rosa's eyebrows resumed their inquisitive and perplexed expression.

"So misplaced," Mr. Grewgious went on, "that I feel constantly

Mr. Grewgious experiences a New Sensation.

apologetic towards him. And he feels (though he doesn't mention it) that I have reason to be."

Mr. Grewgious had by this time grown so very mysterious, that Rosa did not know how to go on. While she was thinking about it Mr. Grewgious suddenly jerked out of himself for the second time:

"Let's talk. We were speaking of Mr. Bazzard. It's a secret, and moreover it is Mr. Bazzard's secret; but the sweet presence at my table makes me so unusually expansive, that I feel I must impart it in inviolable confidence. What do you think Mr. Bazzard has done?"

"O dear!" cried Rosa, drawing her chair a little nearer, and her mind reverting to Jasper, "nothing dreadful, I hope?"

"He has written a play," said Mr. Grewgious, in a solemn whisper. "A tragedy."

Rosa seemed much relieved.

"And nobody," pursued Mr. Grewgious in the same tone, "will hear, on any account whatever, of bringing it out."

Rosa looked reflective, and nodded her head slowly; as who should say, "Such things are, and why are they!"

"Now, you know," said Mr. Grewgious, "*I* couldn't write a play."

"Not a bad one, sir?" said Rosa, innocently, with her eyebrows again in action.

"No. If I was under sentence of decapitation, and was about to be instantly decapitated, and an express arrived with a pardon for the condemned convict Grewgious if he wrote a play, I should be under the necessity of resuming the block, and begging the executioner to proceed to extremities,—meaning," said Mr. Grewgious, passing his hand under his chin, "the singular number, and this extremity."

Rosa appeared to consider what she would do if the awkward supposititious case were hers.

"Consequently," said Mr. Grewgious, "Mr. Bazzard would have a sense of my inferiority to himself under any circumstances; but when I am his master, you know, the case is greatly aggravated."

Mr. Grewgious shook his head seriously, as if he felt the offence to be a little too much, though of his own committing.

"How came you to be his master, sir?" asked Rosa.

"A question that naturally follows," said Mr. Grewgious. "Let's talk. Mr. Bazzard's father, being a Norfolk farmer, would have furiously laid about him with a flail, a pitchfork, and every agricultural implement available for assaulting purposes, on the slightest hint of his son's having written a play. So the son, bringing to me the father's rent (which I receive) imparted his secret, and pointed out that he was determined to pursue his genius, and that it would put him in peril of starvation, and that he was not formed for it."

"For pursuing his genius, sir?"

"No, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, "for starvation. It was impossible to deny the position, that Mr. Bazzard was not formed to be starved, and Mr. Bazzard then pointed out that it was desirable that I should stand between him and a fate so perfectly unsuited to his formation. In that way Mr. Bazzard became my clerk, and he feels it very much."

"I am glad he is grateful," said Rosa.

"I didn't quite mean that, my dear. I mean, that he feels the degradation. There are some other geniuses that Mr. Bazzard has become acquainted with, who have also written tragedies, which likewise nobody will on any account whatever hear of bringing out, and these choice spirits dedicate their plays to one another in a highly panegyrical manner. Mr. Bazzard has been the subject of one of these dedications. Now, you know, *I* never had a play dedicated to *me!*"

Rosa looked at him as if she would have liked him to be the recipient of a thousand dedications.

"Which again, naturally, rubs against the grain of Mr. Bazzard," said Mr. Grewgious. "He is very short with me sometimes, and then I feel that he is meditating, 'This blockhead is my master! A fellow who couldn't write a tragedy on pain of death, and who will never have one dedicated to him with the most complimentary congratulations on the high position he has taken in the eyes of posterity!' Very trying, very trying. However, in giving him directions, I reflect beforehand: 'Perhaps he may not like this,' or 'He might take it ill if I asked that'; and so we get on very well. Indeed, better than I could have expected."

"Is the tragedy named, sir?" asked Rosa.

"Strictly between ourselves," answered Mr. Grewgious, "it has a dreadfully appropriate name. It is called The Thorn of Anxiety. But Mr. Bazzard hopes—and I hope—that it will come out at last."

It was not hard to divine that Mr. Grewgious had related the Bazzard history thus fully, at least quite as much for the recreation of his ward's mind from the subject that had driven her there, as for the gratification of his own tendency to be social and communicative.

"And now, my dear," he said at this point, "if you are not too tired to tell me more of what passed to-day—but only if you feel quite able—I should be glad to hear it. I may digest it the better, if I sleep on it to-night."

Rosa, composed now, gave him a faithful account of the interview. Mr. Grewgious often smoothed his head while it was in progress, and begged to be told a second time those parts which bore on Helena and Neville. When Rosa had finished, he sat grave, silent, and meditative for a while.

"Clearly narrated," was his only remark at last, "and I hope, clearly put away here," smoothing his head again. "See, my dear," taking her to the open window, "where they live! The dark windows over yonder."

"I may go to Helena to-morrow?" asked Rosa.

"I should like to sleep on that question to-night," he answered doubtfully. "But let me take you to your own rest, for you must need it."

With that Mr. Grewgious helped her to get her hat on again, and hung upon his arm the very little bag that was of no earthly use, and led her by the hand (with a certain stately awkwardness, as if he were going to walk a minuet) across Holborn, and into Furnival's Inn. At the hotel door, he confided her to the Unlimited head chambermaid, and said that while she went up to see her room, he would remain below, in case she should wish it exchanged for another, or should find that there was anything she wanted.

Rosa's room was airy, clean, comfortable, almost gay. The Unlimited had laid in everything omitted from the very little bag (that is to say, everything she could possibly need), and Rosa tripped down the great many stairs again, to thank her guardian for his thoughtful and affectionate care of her.

"Not at all, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, infinitely gratified; "it is I who thank you for your charming confidence and for your charming company. Your breakfast will be provided for you in a neat, compact, and graceful little sitting-room (appropriate to your figure), and I will come to you at ten o'clock in the morning. I hope you don't feel very strange indeed, in this strange place."

"O no, I feel so safe!"

"Yes, you may be sure that the stairs are fire-proof," said Mr. Grewgious, "and that any outbreak of the devouring element would be perceived and suppressed by the watchmen."

"I did not mean that," Rosa replied. "I mean, I feel so safe from him."

"There is a stout gate of iron bars to keep him out," said Mr. Grewgious, smiling; "and Furnival's is fire-proof, and specially watched and lighted, and *I* live over the way!" In the stoutness of his knight-errantry, he seemed to think the last-named protection all-sufficient. In the same spirit he said to the gate-porter as he went out, "if some one staying in the hotel should wish to send across the road to me in the night, a crown will be ready for the messenger." In the same spirit, he walked up and down outside the iron gate for the best part of an hour, with some solicitude; occasionally looking in between the bars, as if he had laid a dove in a high roost in a cage of lions, and had it on his mind that she might tumble out.

CHAPTER XXI

A RECOGNITION

Nothing occurred in the night to flutter the tired dove; and the dove arose refreshed. With Mr. Grewgious, when the clock struck ten in the morning, came Mr. Crisparkle, who had come at one plunge out of the river at Cloisterham.

"Miss Twinkleton was so uneasy, Miss Rosa," he explained to her, "and came round to Ma and me with your note, in such a state of wonder, that, to quiet her, I volunteered on this service by the very first train to be caught in the morning. I wished at the time that you had come to me; but now I think it best that you did *as* you did, and came to your guardian."

"I did think of you," Rosa told him; "but Minor Canon Corner was so near him——"

"I understand. It was quite natural."

"I have told Mr. Crisparkle," said Mr. Grewgious, "all that you told me last night, my dear. Of course I should have written it to him immediately; but his coming was most opportune. And it was particularly kind of him to come, for he had but just gone."

"Have you settled," asked Rosa, appealing to them both, "what is to be done for Helena and her brother?"

"Why, really," said Mr. Crisparkle, "I am in great perplexity. If even Mr. Grewgious, whose head is much longer than mine, and who is a whole night's cogitation in advance of me, is undecided, what must I be!"

The Unlimited here put her head in at the door—after having rapped, and been authorised to present herself—announcing that a gentleman wished for a word with another gentleman named Crisparkle, if any such gentleman were there. If no such gentleman were there, he begged pardon for being mistaken.

"Such a gentleman is here," said Mr. Crisparkle, "but is engaged just now."

"Is it a dark gentleman?" interposed Rosa, retreating on her guardian.

"No, Miss, more of a brown gentleman."

"You are sure not with black hair?" asked Rosa, taking courage.

"Quite sure of that, Miss. Brown hair and blue eyes."

"Perhaps," hinted Mr. Grewgious, with habitual caution, "it might be well to see him, reverend sir, if you don't object. When one is in a difficulty or at a loss, one never knows in what direction a way out may chance to open. It is a business principle of mine, in such a case, not to close up any direction, but to keep an eye on every direction that may present itself. I could relate an anecdote in point, but that it would be premature."

"If Miss Rosa will allow me, then? Let the gentleman come in," said Mr. Crisparkle.

The gentleman came in; apologised, with a frank but modest grace, for not finding Mr. Crisparkle alone; turned to Mr. Crisparkle, and smilingly asked the unexpected question: "Who am I?"

"You are the gentleman I saw smoking under the trees in Staple Inn, a few minutes ago."

"True. There I saw you. Who else am I?"

Mr. Crisparkle concentrated his attention on a handsome face, much sunburnt; and the ghost of some departed boy seemed to rise, gradually and dimly, in the room.

The gentleman saw a struggling recollection lighten up the Minor Canon's features, and smiling again, said: "What will you have for breakfast this morning? You are out of jam."

"Wait a moment!" cried Mr. Crisparkle, raising his right hand. "Give me another instant! Tartar!"

The two shook hands with the greatest heartiness, and then went the wonderful length—for Englishmen—of laying their hands each on the other's shoulders, and looking joyfully each into the other's face.

"My old fag!" said Mr. Crisparkle.

"My old master!" said Mr. Tartar.

"You saved me from drowning!" said Mr. Crisparkle.

"After which you took to swimming, you know!" said Mr. Tartar.

"God bless my soul!" said Mr. Crisparkle.

"Amen!" said Mr. Tartar.

And then they fell to shaking hands most heartily again.

"Imagine," exclaimed Mr. Crisparkle, with glistening eyes: "Miss Rosa Bud and Mr. Grewgious, imagine Mr. Tartar, when he was the smallest of juniors, diving for me, catching me, a big heavy senior, by the hair of the head, and striking out for the shore with me like a water-giant!"

"Imagine my not letting him sink, as I was his fag!" said Mr. Tartar. "But the truth being that he was my best protector and friend, and did me more good than all the masters put together, an irrational impulse seized me to pick him up, or go down with him."

"Hem! Permit me, sir to have the honour," said Mr. Grewgious, advancing with extended hand, "for an honour I truly esteem it. I am proud to make your acquaintance. I hope you didn't take cold. I hope you were not inconvenienced by swallowing too much water. How have you been since?"

It was by no means apparent that Mr. Grewgious knew what he said, though it was very apparent that he meant to say something highly friendly and appreciative.

If Heaven, Rosa thought, had but sent such courage and skill to her poor mother's aid! And he to have been so slight and young then!

"I don't wish to be complimented upon it, I thank you; but I think I have an idea," Mr. Grewgious announced, after taking a jog-trot or two across the room, so unexpected and unaccountable that they all stared at him, doubtful whether he was choking or had the cramp—"I *think* I have an idea. I believe I have had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Tartar's name as tenant of the top set in the house next the top set in the corner?"

"Yes, sir," returned Mr. Tartar. "You are right so far."

"I am right so far," said Mr. Grewgious. "Tick that off;" which he did, with his right thumb on his left. "Might you happen to know the name of your neighbour in the top set on the other side of the party-wall?" coming very close to Mr. Tartar, to lose nothing of his face, in his shortness of sight.

"Landless."

"Tick that off," said Mr. Grewgious, taking another trot, and then coming back. "No personal knowledge, I suppose, sir?"

"Slight, but some."

"Tick that off," said Mr. Grewgious, taking another trot, and again coming back. "Nature of knowledge, Mr. Tartar?"

"I thought he seemed to be a young fellow in a poor way, and I asked his leave—only within a day or so—to share my flowers up there with him; that is to say, to extend my flower-garden to his windows."

"Would you have the kindness to take seats?" said Mr. Grewgious. "I *have* an idea!"

They complied; Mr. Tartar none the less readily, for being all abroad; and Mr. Grewgious, seated in the centre, with his hands upon his knees, thus stated his idea, with his usual manner of having got the statement by heart.

"I cannot as yet make up my mind whether it is prudent to hold open communication under present circumstances, and on the part of the fair member of the present company, with Mr. Neville or Miss Helena. I have reason to know that a local friend of ours (on whom I beg to bestow a passing but a hearty malediction, with the kind permission of my reverent friend) sneaks to and fro, and dodges up and down. When not doing so himself, he may have some informant skulking about, in the person of a watchman, porter, or such like hanger-on of Staple. On the other hand, Miss Rosa very naturally wishes to see her friend Miss Helena, and it would seem important that at least Miss Helena (if not her brother too, through her) should privately know from Miss Rosa's lips what has occurred, and what has been threatened. Am I agreed with generally in the views I take?"

"I entirely coincide with them," said Mr. Crisparkle, who had been very attentive.

"As I have no doubt I should," added Mr. Tartar, smiling, "if I understood them."

"Fair and softly, sir," said Mr. Grewgious; "we shall fully confide in you directly, if you will favour us with your permission. Now, if our local friend should have any informant on the spot, it is tolerably clear that such informant can only be set to watch the chambers in the occupation of Mr. Neville. He reporting, to our local friend, who comes and goes there, our local friend would supply for himself, from his own previous knowledge, the identity of the parties. Nobody can be set to watch all Staple, or to concern himself with comers and goers to other sets of chambers: unless, indeed, mine."

"I begin to understand to what you tend," said Mr. Crisparkle, "and highly approve of your caution."

"I needn't repeat that I know nothing yet of the why and wherefore," said Mr. Tartar; "but I also understand to what you tend, so let me say at once that my chambers are freely at your disposal."

"There!" cried Mr. Grewgious, smoothing his head triumphantly, "now we have all got the idea. You have it, my dear?"

"I think I have," said Rosa, blushing a little as Mr. Tartar looked quickly towards her.

"You see, you go over to Staple with Mr. Crisparkle and Mr. Tartar," said Mr. Grewgious; "I going in and out, and out and in alone, in my usual way; you go up with those gentlemen to Mr. Tartar's rooms; you look into Mr. Tartar's flower-garden; you wait for Miss Helena's appearance there, or you signify to Miss Helena that you are close by; and you communicate with her freely, and no spy can be the wiser."

"I am very much afraid I shall be——"

"Be what, my dear?" asked Mr. Grewgious, as she hesitated. "Not frightened?"

"No, not that," said Rosa, shyly; "in Mr. Tartar's way. We seem to be appropriating Mr. Tartar's residence so very coolly."

"I protest to you," returned that gentleman, "that I shall think the better of it for evermore, if your voice sounds in it only once."

Rosa, not quite knowing what to say about that, cast down her eyes, and turning to Mr. Grewgious, dutifully asked if she should put her hat on? Mr. Grewgious being of opinion that she could not do better, she withdrew for the purpose. Mr. Crisparkle took the opportunity of giving Mr. Tartar a summary of the distresses of Neville and his sister; the opportunity was quite long enough, as the hat happened to require a little extra fitting on.

Mr. Tartar gave his arm to Rosa, and Mr. Crisparkle walked, detached, in front.

"Poor, poor Eddy!" thought Rosa, as they went along. Mr. Tartar waved his right hand as he bent his head down over Rosa, talking in an animated way.

"It was not so powerful or so sun-browned when it saved Mr. Crisparkle," thought Rosa, glancing at it; "but it must have been very steady and determined even then."

Mr. Tartar told her he had been a sailor, roving everywhere for years and years.

"When are you going to sea again?" asked Rosa.

"Never."

Rosa wondered what the girls would say if they could see her crossing the wide street on the sailor's arm. And she fancied that the passers-by must think her very little and very helpless, contrasted with the strong figure that could have caught her up and carried her out of any danger, miles and miles without resting.

She was thinking further, that his far-seeing blue eyes looked as if they had been used to watch danger afar off, and to watch it without flinching, drawing nearer and nearer: when, happening to raise her own eyes, she found that he seemed to be thinking something about *them*.

This a little confused Rosebud, and may account for her never afterwards quite knowing how she ascended (with his help) to his garden in the air, and seemed to get into a marvellous country that came into sudden bloom like the country on the summit of the magic bean-stalk. May it flourish for ever!

CHAPTER XXII

A GRITTY STATE OF THINGS COMES ON

Mr. Tartar's chambers were the neatest, the cleanest, and the best-ordered chambers ever seen under the sun, moon, and stars. The floors were scrubbed to that extent, that you might have supposed the London blacks emancipated for ever, and gone out of the land for good. Every inch of brass-work in Mr. Tartar's possession was polished and burnished, till it shone like a brazen mirror. No speck, nor spot, nor spatter soiled the purity of any of Mr. Tartar's household gods, large, small, or middle-sized. His sitting-room was like the admiral's cabin, his bath-room was like a dairy, his sleeping-chamber, fitted all about with lockers and drawers, was like a seedsman's shop; and his nicely-balanced cot just stirred in the midst, as if it breathed. Everything belonging to Mr. Tartar had quarters of its own assigned to it: his maps and charts had their quarters; his books had theirs; his brushes had theirs; his boots had theirs; his clothes had theirs; his case-bottles had theirs; his telescopes and other instruments had theirs. Everything was readily accessible. Shelf, bracket, locker, hook, and drawer were equally within reach, and were equally contrived with a view to avoiding waste of room, and providing some snug inches of stowage for something that would have exactly fitted nowhere else. His gleaming little service of plate was so arranged upon his sideboard as that a slack salt-spoon would have instantly betrayed itself; his toilet implements were so arranged upon his dressing-table as that a toothpick of slovenly deportment could have been reported at a glance. So with the curiosities he had brought home from various voyages. Stuffed, dried, repolished, or otherwise preserved, according to their kind; birds, fishes, reptiles, arms, articles of dress, shells, seaweeds, grasses, or memorials of coral reef; each was displayed in its especial place, and each could have been displayed in no better place. Paint and varnish seemed to be kept somewhere out of sight, in constant readiness to obliterate stray finger-marks wherever any might become perceptible in Mr. Tartar's chambers. No man-of-war was ever kept more spick and span from careless touch. On this bright summer day, a neat awning was rigged over Mr. Tartar's flower-garden as only a sailor could rig it; and there was a sea-going air upon the whole effect, so delightfully complete, that the flower-garden might have appertained to stern-windows afloat, and the whole concern might have bowled away gallantly with all on board, if Mr. Tartar had only clapped to his lips the speaking-trumpet that was slung in a corner, and given hoarse orders to heave the anchor up, look alive there, men, and get all sail upon her!

Mr. Tartar doing the honours of this gallant craft was of a piece with the rest. When a man rides an amiable hobby that shies at nothing and kicks nobody, it is only agreeable to find him riding it with a humorous sense of the droll side of the creature. When the man is a cordial and an earnest man by nature, and withal is perfectly fresh and genuine, it may be doubted whether he is ever seen to greater advantage than at such a time. So Rosa would have naturally thought (even if she hadn't been conducted over the ship with all the homage due to the First Lady of the Admiralty, or First Fairy of the Sea), that it was charming to see and hear Mr. Tartar half laughing at, and half rejoicing in, his various contrivances. So Rosa would have naturally thought, anyhow, that the sunburnt sailor showed to great advantage when, the inspection finished, he delicately withdrew out of his admiral's cabin, beseeching her to consider herself its Queen, and waving her free of his flower-garden with the hand that had had Mr. Crisparkle's life in it.

"Helena! Helena Landless! Are you there?"

"Who speaks to me? Not Rosa?" Then a second handsome face appearing.

"Yes, my darling!"

"Why, how did you come here, dearest?"

"I—I don't quite know," said Rosa with a blush; "unless I am dreaming!"

Why with a blush? For their two faces were alone with the other flowers. Are blushes among the fruits of the country of the magic bean-stalk?

"*I* am not dreaming," said Helena, smiling. "I should take more for granted if I were. How do we come together—or so near together—so very unexpectedly?"

Unexpectedly indeed, among the dingy gables and chimney-pots of P. J. T.'s connection, and the flowers that had sprung from the salt sea. But Rosa, waking, told in a hurry how they came to be together, and all the why and wherefore of that matter.

"And Mr. Crisparkle is here," said Rosa, in rapid conclusion; "and, could you believe it? long ago he saved his life!"

"I could believe any such thing of Mr. Crisparkle," returned Helena, with a mantling face.

(More blushes in the bean-stalk country!)

"Yes, but it wasn't Mr. Crisparkle," said Rosa, quickly putting in the correction.

"I don't understand, love."

"It was very nice of Mr. Crisparkle to be saved," said Rosa, "and he couldn't have shown his high opinion of Mr. Tartar more expressively. But it was Mr. Tartar who saved him."

Helena's dark eyes looked very earnestly at the bright face among the leaves, and she asked, in a slower and more thoughtful tone:

"Is Mr. Tartar with you now, dear?"

"No; because he has given up his rooms to me—to us, I mean. It is such a beautiful place!"

"Is it?"

"It is like the inside of the most exquisite ship that ever sailed. It is like—it is like——"

"Like a dream?" suggested Helena.

Rosa answered with a little nod, and smelled the flowers.

Helena resumed, after a short pause of silence, during which she seemed (or it was Rosa's fancy) to compassionate somebody: "My poor Neville is reading in his own room, the sun being so very bright on this side just now. I think he had better not know that you are so near."

"O, I think so too!" cried Rosa very readily.

"I suppose," pursued Helena, doubtfully, "that he must know by and by all you have told me; but I am not sure. Ask Mr. Crisparkle's advice, my darling. Ask him whether I may tell Neville as much or as little of what you have told me as I think best."

Rosa subsided into her state-cabin, and propounded the question. The Minor Canon was for the free exercise of Helena's judgment.

"I thank him very much," said Helena, when Rosa emerged again with her report. "Ask him whether it would be best to wait until any more maligning and pursuing of Neville on the part of this wretch shall disclose itself, or to try to anticipate it: I mean, so far as to find out whether any such goes on darkly about us?"

The Minor Canon found this point so difficult, to give a confident opinion on, that, after two or three attempts and failures, he suggested a reference to Mr. Grewgious. Helena acquiescing, he betook himself (with a most unsuccessful assumption of lounging indifference) across the quadrangle to P. J. T.'s, and stated it. Mr. Grewgious held decidedly to the general principle, that if you could steal a march upon a brigand or a wild beast, you had better do it; and he also held decidedly to the special case, that John Jasper was a brigand and a wild beast in combination.

Thus advised, Mr. Crisparkle came back again and reported to Rosa, who in her turn reported to Helena. She now steadily pursuing her train of thought at her window, considered thereupon.

"We may count on Mr. Tartar's readiness to help us, Rosa?" she inquired.

O yes! Rosa shyly thought so. O yes, Rosa shyly believed she could almost answer for it. But should she ask Mr. Crisparkle? "I think your authority on the point as good as his, my dear," said Helena, sedately, "and you needn't disappear again for that." Odd of Helena!

"You see, Neville," Helena pursued after more reflection, "knows no one else here: he has not so much as exchanged a word with any one else here. If Mr. Tartar would call to see him openly and often; if he would spare a minute for the purpose, frequently; if he would even do so, almost daily; something might come of it."

"Something might come of it, dear?" repeated Rosa, surveying her friend's beauty with a highly perplexed face. "Something might?"

"If Neville's movements are really watched, and if the purpose really is to isolate him from all friends and acquaintance and wear his daily life out grain by grain (which would seem to be the threat to you), does it not appear likely," said Helena, "that his enemy would in some way communicate with Mr. Tartar to warn him off from Neville? In which case, we might not only know the fact, but might know from Mr. Tartar what the terms of the communication were."

"I see!" cried Rosa. And immediately darted into her state-cabin again.

Presently her pretty face reappeared, with a greatly heightened colour, and she said that she had told Mr. Crisparkle, and that Mr. Crisparkle had fetched in Mr. Tartar, and that Mr. Tartar—"who is waiting now, in case you want him," added Rosa, with a half look back, and in not a little confusion between the inside of the state-cabin and out—had declared his readiness to act as she had suggested, and to enter on his task that very day.

"I thank him from my heart," said Helena. "Pray tell him so."

Again not a little confused between the Flower-garden and the Cabin, Rosa dipped in with her message, and dipped out again with more assurances from Mr. Tartar, and stood wavering in a divided state between Helena and him, which proved that confusion is not always necessarily awkward, but may sometimes present a very pleasant appearance.

"And now, darling," said Helena, "we will be mindful of the caution that has restricted us to this interview for the present, and will part. I hear Neville moving too. Are you going back?"

"To Miss Twinkleton's ?" asked Rosa.

"Yes."

"O, I could never go there any more; I couldn't indeed, after that dreadful interview!" said Rosa.

"Then where *are* you going, pretty one?"

"Now I come to think of it, I don't know," said Rosa. "I have settled nothing at all yet, but my guardian will take care of me. Don't be uneasy, dear. I shall be sure to be somewhere."

(It did seem likely.)

"And I shall hear of my Rosebud from Mr. Tartar?" inquired Helena.

"Yes, I suppose so; from——" Rosa looked back again in a flutter, instead of supplying the name. "But tell me one thing before we part, dearest Helena. Tell me that you are sure, sure, sure, I couldn't help it."

"Help it, love?"

"Help making him malicious and revengeful. I couldn't hold any terms with him, could I?"

"You know how I love you, darling," answered Helena, with indignation; "but I would sooner see you dead at his wicked feet."

"That's a great comfort to me! And you will tell your poor brother so, won't you? And you will give him my remembrance and my sympathy? And you will ask him not to hate me?"

With a mournful shake of the head, as if that would be quite a superfluous entreaty, Helena lovingly kissed her two hands to her friend, and her friend's two hands were kissed to her; and then she saw a third hand (a brown one) appear among the flowers and leaves, and help her friend out of sight.

The refection that Mr. Tartar produced in the Admiral's Cabin by merely touching the spring knob of a locker and the handle of a drawer, was a dazzling enchanted repast. Wonderful macaroons, glittering liqueurs, magically-preserved tropical spices, and jellies of celestial tropical fruits, displayed themselves profusely at an instant's notice. But Mr. Tartar could not make time stand still; and time, with his hard-hearted fleetness, strode on so fast, that Rosa was obliged to come down from the bean-stalk country to earth and her guardian's chambers.

"And now, my dear," said Mr. Grewgious, "what is to be done next? To put the same thought in another form; what is to be done with you?"

Rosa could only look apologetically sensible of being very much in her own way and in everybody's else's. Some passing idea of living, fireproof, up a good many stairs in Furnival's Inn for the rest of her life, was the only thing in the nature of a plan that occurred to her.

"It has come into my thoughts," said Mr. Grewgious, "that as the respected lady, Miss Twinkleton, occasionally repairs to London in the recess, with the view of extending her connection, and being available for interviews with metropolitan parents, if any—whether, until we have time in which to turn ourselves round, we might invite Miss Twinkleton to come and stay with you for a month?"

"Stay where, sir?"

"Whether," explained Mr. Grewgious, "we might take a furnished lodging in town for a month, and invite Miss Twinkleton to assume the charge of you in it for that period?"

"And afterwards?" hinted Rosa.

"And afterwards," said Mr. Grewgious, "we should be no worse off than we are now."

"I think that might smooth the way," assented Rosa.

"Then let us," said Mr. Grewgious, rising, "go and look for a furnished lodging. Nothing could be more acceptable to me than the sweet presence of last evening, for all the remaining evenings of my existence; but these are not fit surroundings for a young lady. Let us set out in quest of adventures, and look for a furnished lodging. In the meantime, Mr. Crisparkle here, about to return home immediately, will no doubt kindly see Miss Twinkleton, and invite that lady to co-operate in our plan."

Mr. Crisparkle, willingly accepting the commission, took his departure; Mr. Grewgious and his ward set forth on their expedition.

As Mr. Grewgious's idea of looking at a furnished lodging was to get on the opposite side of the street to a house with a suitable bill in the window, and stare at it; and then work his way tortuously to the back of the house, and stare at that; and then not go in, but make similar trials of another house, with the same result; their progress was but slow. At length he bethought himself of a widowed cousin, divers times removed, of Mr. Bazzard's, who had once solicited his influence in the lodger world, and who lived in Southampton Street, Bloomsbury Square. This lady's name, stated in uncompromising capitals of considerable size on a brass door-plate, and yet not lucidly as to sex or condition, was BILLICKIN.

Personal faintness, and an overpowering personal candour, were the distinguishing features of Mrs. Billickin's organisation. She came languishing out of her own exclusive back parlour, with the air of having been expressly brought-to for the purpose, from an accumulation of several swoons.

"I hope I see you well, sir," said Mrs. Billickin, recognising her visitor with a bend.

"Thank you, quite well. And you, ma'am?" returned Mr. Grewgious.

"I am as well," said Mrs. Billickin, becoming aspirational with excess of faintness, "as I hever ham."

"My ward and an elderly lady," said Mr. Grewgious, "wish to find a genteel lodging for a month or so. Have you any apartments available, ma'am?"

"Mr. Grewgious," returned Mrs. Billickin, "I will not deceive you; far from it. I *have* apartments available."

This with the air of adding: "Convey me to the stake, if you will; but while I live, I will be candid."

"And now, what apartments, ma'am?" asked Mr. Grewgious, cosily. To tame a certain severity apparent on the part of Mrs. Billickin.

"There is this sitting-room—which, call it what you will, it is the front parlour, Miss," said Mrs. Billickin, impressing Rosa into the conversation: "the back parlour being what I cling to and never part with; and there is two bedrooms at the top of the 'ouse with gas laid on. I do not tell you that your bedroom floors is firm, for firm they are not. The gas-fitter himself allowed, that to make a firm job, he must go right under your jistes, and it were not worth the outlay as a yearly tenant so to do. The piping is carried above your jistes, and it is best that it should be made known to you."

Mr. Grewgious and Rosa exchanged looks of some dismay, though they had not the least idea what latent horrors this carriage of the piping might involve. Mrs. Billickin put her hand to her heart, as having eased it of a load.

"Well! The roof is all right, no doubt," said Mr. Grewgious, plucking up a little.

"Mr. Grewgious," returned Mrs. Billickin, "if I was to tell you, sir, that to have nothink above you is to have a floor above you, I should put a deception upon you which I will not do. No, sir. Your slates WILL rattle loose at that elevation in windy weather, do your utmost, best or worst! I defy you, sir, be you what you may, to keep your slates tight, try how you can." Here Mrs. Billickin, having been warm with Mr. Grewgious, cooled a little, not to abuse the moral power she held over him. "Consequent," proceeded Mrs. Billickin, more mildly, but still firmly in her incorruptible candour: "consequent it would be worse than of no use for me to trapse and travel up to the top of the 'ouse with you, and for you to say, 'Mrs. Billickin, what stain do I notice in the ceiling, for a stain I do consider it?' and for me to answer, 'I do not understand you, sir.' No, sir, I will not be so underhand. I *do* understand you before you pint it out. It is the wet, sir. It do come in, and it do not come in. You may lay dry there half your lifetime; but the time will come, and it is best that you should know it, when a dripping sop would be no name for you."

Mr. Grewgious looked much disgraced by being prefigured in this pickle.

"Have you any other apartments, ma'am?" he asked.

"Mr. Grewgious," returned Mrs. Billickin, with much solemnity, "I have. You ask me have I, and my open and my honest answer air, I have. The first and second floors is wacant, and sweet rooms."

"Come, come! There's nothing against *them*," said Mr. Grewgious, comforting himself.

"Mr. Grewgious," replied Mrs. Billickin, "pardon me, there is the stairs. Unless your mind is prepared for the stairs, it will lead to inevitable disappointment. You cannot, Miss," said Mrs. Billickin, addressing Rosa reproachfully, "place a first floor, and far less a second, on the level footing of a parlour. No, you cannot do it, Miss, it is beyond your power, and wherefore try?"

Mrs. Billickin put it very feelingly, as if Rosa had shown a headstrong determination to hold the untenable position.

"Can we see these rooms, ma'am?" inquired her guardian.

"Mr. Grewgious," returned Mrs. Billickin, "you can. I will not disguise it from you, sir; you can."

Mrs. Billickin then sent into her back parlour for her shawl (it being a state fiction, dating from immemorial antiquity, that she could never go anywhere without being wrapped up), and having been enrolled by her attendant, led the way. She made various genteel pauses on the stairs for breath, and clutched at her heart in the drawing-room as if it had very nearly got loose, and she had caught it in the act of taking wing.

"And the second floor?" said Mr. Grewgious, on finding the first satisfactory.

"Mr. Grewgious," replied Mrs. Billickin, turning upon him with ceremony, as if the time had now come when a distinct understanding on a difficult point must be arrived at, and a solemn confidence established, "the second floor is over this."

"Can we see that too, ma'am?"

"Yes, sir," returned Mrs. Billickin, "it is open as the day."

That also proving satisfactory, Mr. Grewgious retired into a window with Rosa for a few words of consultation, and then asking for pen and ink, sketched out a line or two of agreement. In the meantime Mrs. Billickin took a seat, and delivered a kind of Index to, or Abstract of, the general question.

"Five-and-forty shillings per week by the month certain at the time of year," said Mrs. Billickin, "is only reasonable to both parties. It is not Bond Street nor yet St. James's Palace; but it is not pretended that it is. Neither is it attempted to be denied—for why should it?—that the Arching leads to a mews. Mewses must exist. Respecting attendance; two is kep', at liberal wages. Words *has* arisen as to tradesmen, but dirty shoes on fresh hearth-stoning was attributable, and no wish for a commission on your orders. Coals is either *by* fire, or *per* the scuttle." She emphasised the prepositions as marking a subtle but immense difference. "Dogs is not viewed with favour. Besides litter, they gets stole, and sharing suspicions is apt to creep in, and unpleasantness takes place."

By this time Mr. Grewgious had his agreement-lines, and his earnest-money ready. "I have signed it for the ladies, ma'am," he said, "and you'll have the goodness to sign it for yourself, Christian and Surname, there, if you please."

"Mr. Grewgious," said Mrs. Billickin in a new burst of candour, "no sir! You must excuse the Christian name."

Mr. Grewgious stared at her.

"The door-plate is used as a protection," said Mrs. Billickin, "and acts as such, and go from it I will not."

Mr. Grewgious stared at Rosa.

"No, Mr. Grewgious, you must excuse me. So long as this 'ouse is known indefinite as Billickin's, and so long as it is a doubt with the riff-raff where Billickin may be hidin', near the street-door or down the airy, and what his weight and size, so long I feel safe. But commit myself to a solitary female statement, no, Miss! Nor would you for a moment wish," said Mrs. Billickin, with a strong sense of injury, "to take that advantage of your sex, if you were not brought to it by inconsiderate example."

Rosa reddening as if she had made some most disgraceful attempt to overreach the good lady, besought Mr. Grewgious to rest content with any signature. And accordingly, in a baronial way, the sign-manual BILLICKIN got appended to the document.

Details were then settled for taking possession on the next day but one, when Miss Twinkleton might be reasonably expected and Rosa went back to Furnival's Inn on her guardian's arm.

Behold Mr. Tartar walking up and down Furnival's Inn, checking himself when he saw them coming, and advancing towards them!

"It occurred to me," hinted Mr. Tartar, "that we might go up the

Up the River.

river, the weather being so delicious and the tide serving. I have a boat of my own at the Temple Stairs."

"I have not been up the river for this many a day," said Mr. Grewgious, tempted.

"I was never up the river," added Rosa.

Within half an hour they were setting this matter right by going up the river. The tide was running with them, the afternoon was charming. Mr. Tartar's boat was perfect. Mr. Tartar and Lobley (Mr. Tartar's man) pulled a pair of oars. Mr. Tartar had a yacht, it seemed, lying somewhere down by Greenhithe; and Mr. Tartar's man had charge of this yacht, and was detached upon his present service. He was a jolly-favoured man, with tawny hair and whiskers, and a big red face. He was the dead image of the sun in old woodcuts, his hair and whiskers answering for rays all around him. Resplendent in the bow of the boat, he was a shining sight, with a man-of-war's man's shirt on—or off, according to opinion—and his arms and breast tattooed all sorts of patterns. Lobley seemed to take it easily, and so did Mr. Tartar; yet their oars bent as they pulled, and the boat bounded under them. Mr. Tartar talked as if he were doing nothing, to Rosa who was really doing nothing, and to Mr. Grewgious who was doing this much that he steered all wrong; but what did that matter, when a turn of Mr. Tartar's skilful wrist, or a mere grin of Mr. Lobley's over the bow, put all to rights! The tide bore them on in the gayest and most sparkling manner, until they stopped to dine in some everlastingly-green garden, needing no matter-of-fact identification here; and then the tide obligingly turned—being devoted to that party alone for that day; and as they floated idly among some osier-beds, Rosa tried what she could do in the rowing way, and came off splendidly, being much assisted; and Mr. Grewgious tried what he could do, and came off on his back, doubled up with an oar under his chin, being not assisted at all. Then there was an interval of rest under boughs (such rest!) what time Mr. Lobley mopped, and, arranging cushions, stretchers, and the like, danced the tight-rope the whole length of the boat like a man to whom shoes were a superstition and stockings slavery; and then came the sweet return among delicious odours of limes in bloom, and musical ripplings; and, all too soon, the great black city cast its shadow on the waters, and its dark bridges spanned them as death spans life, and the everlastingly-green garden seemed to be left for everlasting, unregainable and far away.

"Cannot people get through life without gritty stages, I wonder?" Rosa thought next day, when the town was very gritty again, and everything had a strange and an uncomfortable appearance of seeming to wait for something that wouldn't come. No. She began to think that, now the Cloisterham school-days had glided past and gone, the gritty stages would begin to set in at intervals and make themselves wearily known!

Yet what did Rosa expect? Did she expect Miss Twinkleton? Miss Twinkleton duly came. Forth from her back parlour issued the Billickin to receive Miss Twinkleton, and War was in the Billickin's eye from that fell moment.

Miss Twinkleton brought a quantity of luggage with her, having all Rosa's as well as her own. The Billickin took it ill that Miss Twinkleton's mind, being sorely disturbed by this luggage, failed to take in her personal identity with that clearness of perception which was due to its demands. Stateliness mounted her gloomy throne upon the Billickin's brow in consequence. And when Miss Twinkleton, in agitation taking stock of her trunks and packages, of which she had seventeen, particularly counted in the Billickin herself as number eleven, the B. found it necessary to repudiate.

"Things cannot too soon be put upon the footing," said she, with a candour so demonstrative as to be almost obtrusive, "that the person of the 'ouse is not a box nor yet a bundle, nor a carpet-bag. No, I am 'ily obleeged to you, Miss Twinkleton, nor yet a beggar."

This last disclaimer had reference to Miss Twinkleton's distractedly pressing two-and-sixpence on her, instead of the cabman.

Thus cast off, Miss Twinkleton wildly inquired, "which gentleman" was to be paid? There being two gentlemen in that position (Miss Twinkleton having arrived with two cabs), each gentleman on being paid held forth his two-and-sixpence on the flat of his open hand, and, with a speechless stare and a dropped jaw, displayed his wrong to heaven and earth. Terrified by this alarming spectacle, Miss Twinkleton placed another shilling in each hand; at the same time appealing to the law in flurried accents, and recounting her luggage this time with the two gentlemen in, who caused the total to come out complicated. Meanwhile the two gentlemen, each looking very hard at the last shilling grumblingly, as if it might become eighteen pence if he kept his eyes on it, descended the doorsteps, ascended their carriages, and drove away, leaving Miss Twinkleton on a bonnet-box in tears.

The Billickin beheld this manifestation of weakness without sympathy, and gave directions for "a young man to be got in" to wrestle with the luggage. When that gladiator had disappeared from the arena, peace ensued, and the new lodgers dined.

But the Billickin had somehow come to the knowledge that Miss Twinkleton kept a school. The leap from that knowledge to the inference that Miss Twinkleton set herself to teach *her* something, was easy. "But you don't do it," soliloquised the Billickin; *I* am not your pupil, whatever she," meaning Rosa, "may be, poor thing!"

Miss Twinkleton, on the other hand, having changed her dress and recovered her spirits, was animated by a bland desire to improve the occasion in all ways, and to be as serene a model as possible. In a happy compromise between her two states of existence, she had already become, with her workbasket before her, the equably vivacious companion with a slight judicious flavouring of information, when the Billickin announced herself.

"I will not hide from you, ladies," said the B., enveloped in the shawl of state, "for it is not my character to hide neither my motives nor my actions, that I take the liberty to look in upon you to express a 'ope that your dinner was to your liking. Though not Professed but Plain, still her wages should be a sufficient object to her to stimilate to soar above mere roast and biled."

"We dined very well indeed," said Rosa, "thank you."

"Accustomed," said Miss Twinkleton with a gracious air, which to the jealous ears of the Billickin seemed to add "my good woman"—"accustomed to a liberal and nutritious, yet plain and salutary diet, we have found no reason to bemoan our absence from the ancient city, and the methodical household, in which the quiet routine of our lot has been hitherto cast."

"I did think it well to mention to my cook," observed the Billickin with a gush of candour, "which I 'ope you will agree with, Miss Twinkleton, was a right precaution, that the young lady being used to what we should consider here but poor diet, had better be brought forward by degrees. For a rush from scanty feeding to generous feeding, and from what you may call messing to what you may call method, do require a power of constitution which is not often found in youth, particular when undermined by boarding-school!"

It will be seen that the Billickin now openly pitted herself against Miss Twinkleton, as one whom she had fully ascertained to be her natural enemy.

"Your remarks," returned Miss Twinkleton, from a remote moral eminence, "are well meant, I have no doubt; but you will permit me to observe that they develop a mistaken view of the subject, which can only be imputed to your extreme want of accurate information."

"My information," retorted the Billickin, throwing in an extra syllable for the sake of emphasis at once polite and powerful—"my information, Miss Twinkleton, were my own experience, which I believe is usually considered to be good guidance. But whether so or not, I was put in youth to a very genteel boarding-school, the mistress being no less a lady than yourself, of about your own age or it may be some years younger, and a poorness of blood flowed from the table which has run through my life."

"Very likely," said Miss Twinkleton, still from her distant eminence; "and very much to be deplored.—Rosa, my dear, how are you getting on with your work?"

"Miss Twinkleton," resumed the Billickin, in a courtly manner, "before retiring on the 'int, as a lady should, I wish to ask of yourself, as a lady, whether I am to consider that my words is doubted?"

"I am not aware on what ground you cherish such a supposition," began Miss Twinkleton, when the Billickin neatly stopped her.

"Do not, if you please, put suppositions betwixt my lips where none such have been imparted by myself. Your flow of words is great, Miss Twinkleton, and no doubt is expected from you by your pupils, and no doubt is considered worth the money. *No* doubt, I am sure. But not paying for flow of words, and not asking to be favoured with them here, I wish to repeat my question."

"If you refer to the poverty of your circulation," began Miss Twinkleton, when again the Billickin neatly stopped her.

"I have used no such expressions."

"If you refer, then, to the poorness of your blood——"

"Brought upon me," stipulated the Billickin, expressly, "at a boarding-school——"

"Then," resumed Miss Twinkleton, "all I can say is, that I am bound to believe, on your asseveration, that it is very poor indeed. I cannot forbear adding, that if that unfortunate circumstance influences your conversation, it is much to be lamented, and it is eminently desirable that your blood were richer.—Rosa, my dear, how are you getting on with your work?"

"Hem! Before retiring, Miss," proclaimed the Billickin to Rosa, loftily cancelling Miss Twinkleton, "I should wish it to be understood between yourself and me that my transactions in future is with you alone. I know no elderly lady here, Miss, none older than yourself."

"A highly desirable arrangement, Rosa my dear," observed Miss Twinkleton.

"It is not, Miss," said the Billickin, with a sarcastic smile, "that I possess the Mill I have heard of, in which old single ladies could be ground up young (what a gift it would be to some of us), but that I limit myself to you totally."

"When I have any desire to communicate a request to the person of the house, Rosa my dear," observed Miss Twinkleton with majestic cheerfulness, "I will make it known to you, and you will kindly undertake, I am sure, that it is conveyed to the proper quarter."

"Good-evening, Miss," said the Billickin, at once affectionately and distantly. "Being alone in my eyes, I wish you good-evening with best wishes, and do not find myself drove, I am truly 'appy to say, into expressing my contempt for an indiwidual, unfortunately for yourself, belonging to you."

The Billickin gracefully withdrew with this parting speech, and from that time Rosa occupied the restless position of shuttlecock between these two battledores. Nothing could be done without a smart match being played out. Thus, on the daily-arising question of dinner, Miss Twinkleton would say, the three being present together:

"Perhaps, my love, you will consult with the person of the house, whether she can procure us a lamb's fry; or, failing that, a roast fowl."

On which the Billickin would retort (Rosa not having spoken a word), "If you was better accustomed to butcher's meat, Miss, you would not entertain the idea of a lamb's fry. Firstly, because lambs has long been sheep, and secondly, because there is such things as killing-days, and there is not. As to roast fowls, Miss, why you must be quite surfeited with roast fowls, letting alone your buying, when you market for yourself, the agedest of poultry with the scaliest of legs, quite as if you was accustomed to picking 'em out for cheapness. Try a little inwintion, Miss. Use yourself to 'ouse-keeping a bit. Come now, think of somethink else."

To this encouragement, offered with the indulgent toleration of a wise and liberal expert, Miss Twinkleton would rejoin, reddening:

"Or, my dear, you might propose to the person of the house a duck."

"Well, Miss!" the Billickin would exclaim (still no word being spoken by Rosa), "you do surprise me when you speak of ducks! Not to mention that they're getting out of season and very dear, it really strikes to my heart to see you have a duck; for the breast, which is the only delicate cuts in a duck, always goes in a direction which I cannot imagine where, and your own plate comes down so miserably skin-and-bony! Try again, Miss. Think more of yourself, and less of others. A dish of sweetbreads now, or a bit of mutton. Something at which you can get your equal chance."

Occasionally the game would wax very brisk indeed, and would be kept up with a smartness rendering such an encounter as this quite tame. But the Billickin almost invariably made by far the higher score; and would come in with side hits of the most unexpected and extraordinary description, when she seemed without a chance.

All this did not improve the gritty state of things in London, or the air that London had acquired in Rosa's eyes of waiting for something that never came. Tired of working, and conversing with Miss Twinkleton, she suggested working and reading: to which Miss Twinkleton readily assented, as an admirable reader, of tried powers. But Rosa soon made the discovery that Miss Twinkleton didn't read fairly. She cut the love-scenes, interpolated passages in praise of female celibacy, and was guilty of other glaring pious frauds. As an instance in point, take the glowing passage: "Ever dearest and best adored,—said Edward, clasping the dear head to his breast, and drawing the silken hair through his caressing fingers, from which he suffered it to fall like golden rain,—ever dearest and best adored, let us fly from the unsympathetic world and the sterile coldness of the stony-hearted, to the rich warm Paradise of Trust and Love." Miss Twinkleton's fraudulent version tamely ran thus: "Ever engaged to me with the consent of our parents on both sides, and the approbation of the silver-haired rector of the district,—said Edward, respectfully raising to his lips the taper fingers so skilful in embroidery, tambour, crochet, and other truly feminine arts,—let me call on thy papa ere to-morrow's dawn has sunk into the west, and propose a suburban establishment, lowly it may be, but within our means, where he will be always welcome as an evening guest, and where every arrangement shall invest economy, and constant interchange of scholastic acquirements with the attributes of the ministering angel to domestic bliss."

As the days crept on and nothing happened, the neighbours began to say that the pretty girl at Billickin's, who looked so wistfully and so much out of the gritty windows of the drawing-room, seemed to be losing her spirits. The pretty girl might have lost them but for the accident of lighting on some books of voyages and sea-adventure. As a compensation against their romance, Miss Twinkleton, reading aloud, made the most of all the latitudes and longitudes, bearings, winds, currents, offsets, and other statistics (which she felt to be none the less improving because they expressed nothing whatever to her); while Rosa, listening intently, made the most of what was nearest to her heart. So they both did better than before.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DAWN AGAIN

ALTHOUGH Mr. Crisparkle and John Jasper met daily under the Cathedral roof, nothing at any time passed between them having reference to Edwin Drood, after the time, more than half a year gone by, when Jasper mutely showed the Minor Canon the conclusion and the resolution entered in his Diary. It is not likely that they ever met, though so often, without the thoughts of each reverting to the subject. It is not likely that they ever met, though so often, without a sensation on the part of each that the other was a perplexing secret to him. Jasper as the denouncer and pursuer of Neville Landless, and Mr. Crisparkle as his consistent advocate and protector, must at least have stood sufficiently in opposition to have speculated with keen interest on the steadiness and next direction of the other's designs. But neither ever broached the theme.

False pretence not being in the Minor Canon's nature, he doubtless displayed openly that he would at any time have revived the subject, and even desired to discuss it. The determined reticence of Jasper, however, was not to be so approached. Impassive, moody, solitary, resolute, so concentrated on one idea, and on its attendant fixed purpose, that he would share it with no fellow-creature, he lived apart from human life. Constantly exercising an Art which brought him into mechanical harmony with others, and which could not have been pursued unless he and they had been in the nicest mechanical relations and unison, it is curious to consider that the spirit of the man was in moral accordance or interchange with nothing around him. This indeed he had confided to his lost nephew, before the occasion for his present inflexibility arose.

That he must know of Rosa's abrupt departure, and that he must divine its cause, was not to be doubted. Did he suppose that he had terrified her into silence? or did he suppose that she had imparted to any one—to Mr. Crisparkle himself, for instance—the particulars of his last interview with her? Mr. Crisparkle could not determine this in his mind. He could not but admit, however, as a just man, that it was not, of itself, a crime to fall in love with Rosa, any more than it was a crime to offer to set love above revenge.

The dreadful suspicion of Jasper, which Rosa was so shocked to have received into her imagination, appeared to have no harbour in Mr. Crisparkle's. If it ever haunted Helena's thoughts or Neville's, neither gave it one spoken word of utterance. Mr. Grewgious took no pains to conceal his implacable dislike of Jasper, yet he never referred it, however distantly, to such a source. But he was a reticent as well as an eccentric man; and he made no mention of a certain evening when he warmed his hands at the gate-house fire, and looked steadily down upon a certain heap of torn and miry clothes upon the floor.

Drowsy Cloisterham, whenever it awoke to a passing reconsideration of a story above six months old and dismissed by the bench of magistrates, was pretty equally divided in opinion whether John Jasper's beloved nephew had been killed by his treacherously passionate rival, or in an open struggle; or had, for his own purposes, spirited himself away. It then lifted up its head, to notice that the bereaved Jasper was still ever devoted to discovery and revenge; and then dozed off again. This was the condition of matters, all round, at the period to which the present history has now attained.

The Cathedral doors have closed for the night; and the Choirmaster, on a short leave of absence for two or three services, sets his face towards London. He travels thither by the means by which Rosa travelled, and arrives, as Rosa arrived, on a hot, dusty evening.

His travelling baggage is easily carried in his hand, and he repairs with it on foot, to a hybrid hotel in a little square behind Aldersgate Street, near the General Post Office. It is hotel, boarding-house, or lodging-house, at its visitor's option. It announces itself, in the new Railway Advertisers, as a novel enterprise, timidly beginning to spring up. It bashfully, almost apologetically, gives the traveller to understand that it does not expect him, on the good old constitutional hotel plan, to order a pint of sweet blacking for his drinking, and throw it away; but insinuates that he may have his boots blacked instead of his stomach, and maybe also have bed, breakfast, attendance, and a porter up all night, for a certain fixed charge. From these and similar premises, many true Britons in the lowest spirits deduce that the times are levelling times, except in the article of high roads, of which there will shortly be not one in England.

He eats without appetite, and soon goes forth again. Eastward and still eastward through the stale streets he takes his way, until he reaches his destination: a miserable court, specially miserable among many such.

He ascends a broken staircase, opens a door, looks into a dark stifling room, and says: "Are you alone here?"

"Alone, deary; worse luck for me, and better for you," replies a croaking voice. "Come in, come in, whoever you be: I can't see you till I light a match, yet I seem to know the sound of your speaking. I'm acquainted with you, ain't I?"

"Light your match, and try."

"So I will, deary, so I will; but my hand that shakes as I can't lay it on a match all in a moment. And I cough so, that, put my matches where I may, I never find 'em there. They jump and start, as I cough and cough, like live things. Are you off a voyage, deary?"

"No."

"Not seafaring?"

"No."

"Well, there's land customers, and there's water customers. I'm a mother to both. Different from Jack Chinaman t'other side the court. He ain't a father to neither. It ain't in him. And he ain't got the true secret of mixing, though he charges as much as me that has, and more if he can get it. Here's a match, and now where's the candle? If my cough takes me, I shall cough out twenty matches afore I gets a light."

But she finds the candle, and lights it, before the cough comes on. It seizes her in the moment of success, and she sits down rocking herself to and fro, and gasping at intervals: "O, my lungs is awful bad! my lungs is wore away to cabbage-nets!" until the fit is over. During its continuance she has had no power of sight, or any other power not absorbed in the struggle; but as it leaves her, she begins to strain her eyes, and as soon as she is able to articulate, she cries, staring:

"Why, it's you!"

"Are you so surprised to see me?"

"I thought I never should have seen you again, deary. I thought you was dead, and gone to Heaven."

"Why?"

"I didn't suppose you could have kept away, alive, so long, from the poor old soul with the real receipt for mixing it. And you are in mourning too! Why didn't you come and have a pipe or two of comfort? Did they leave you money, perhaps, and so you didn't want comfort?"

"No."

"Who was they as died, deary?"

"A relative."

"Died of what, lovey?"

"Probably, Death."

"We are short to-night!" cries the woman, with a propitiatory laugh. "Short and snappish we are! But we're out of sorts for want of a smoke. We've got the all-overs, haven't us, deary? But this is the place to cure 'em in; this is the place where the all-overs is smoked off."

"You may make ready, then," replies the visitor, "as soon as you like."

He divests himself of his shoes, loosens his cravat, and lies across the foot of the squalid bed, with his head resting on his left hand.

"Now you begin to look like yourself," says the woman approvingly. "Now I begin to know my old customer indeed! Been trying to mix for yourself this long time, poppet?"

"I have been taking it now and then in my own way."

"Never take it in your own way. It ain't good for trade, and it ain't good for you. Where's my ink-bottle, and where's my thimble, and where's my little spoon? He's going to take it in a artful form now, my deary dear!"

Entering on her process, and beginning to bubble and blow at the faint spark enclosed in the hollow of her hands, she speaks from time to time, in a tone of snuffling satisfaction, without leaving off. When he speaks, he does so without looking at her, and as if his thoughts were already roaming away by anticipation.

"I've got a pretty many smokes ready for you, first and last, haven't I, chuckey?"

"A good many."

"When you first come, you was quite new to it; warn't ye?"

"Yes, I was easily disposed of, then."

"But you got on in the world, and was able by and by to take your pipe with the best of 'em, warn't ye?"

"Ah; and the worst."

"It's just ready for you. What a sweet singer you was when you first come! Used to drop your head, and sing yourself off like a bird! It's ready for you now, deary."

He takes it from her with great care, and puts the mouth-piece to his lips. She seats herself beside him ready to refill the pipe. After inhaling a few whiffs in silence, he doubtingly accosts her with:

"Is it as potent as it used to be?"

"What do you speak of, deary?"

"What should I speak of, but what I have in my mouth?"

"It's just the same. Always the identical same."

"It doesn't taste so. And it's slower."

"You've got more used to it, you see."

"That may be the cause, certainly. Look here." He stops, becomes dreamy, and seems to forget that he has invited her attention. She bends over him, and speaks in his ear.

"I'm attending to you. Says you just now, Look here. Says I now, I'm attending to ye. We was talking just before of your being used to it."

"I know all that. I was only thinking. Look here. Suppose you had something in your mind; something you were going to do."

"Yes, deary; something I was going to do?"

"But had not quite determined to do."

"Yes, deary."

"Might or might not do, you understand."

"Yes." With the point of a needle she stirs the contents of the bowl.

"Should you do it in your fancy, when you were lying here doing this?"

She nods her head. "Over and over again."

"Just like me! I did it over and over again. I have done it hundreds of thousands of times in this room."

"It's to be hoped it was pleasant to do, deary."

"It *was* pleasant to do!"

He says this with a savage air, and a spring or start at her. Quite unmoved, she retouches and replenishes the contents of the bowl with her little spatula. Seeing her intent upon the occupation, he sinks into his former attitude.

"It was a journey, a difficult and dangerous journey. That was the subject in my mind. A hazardous and perilous journey, over abysses where a slip would be destruction. Look down, look down! You see what lies at the bottom there?"

He has darted forward to say it, and to point at the ground, as though at some imaginary object far beneath. The woman looks at him, as his spasmodic face approaches close to hers, and not at his pointing. She seems to know what the influence of her perfect quietude would be; if so, she has not miscalculated it, for he subsides again.

"Well; I have told you I did it here hundreds of thousands of times. What do I say? I did it millions and billions of times. I did it so often, and through such vast expanses of time, that when it was really done, it seemed not worth the doing, it was done so soon."

"That's the journey you have been away upon," she quietly remarks.

He glares at her as he smokes; and then, his eyes becoming filmy, answers: "That's the journey."

Silence ensues. His eyes are sometimes closed and sometimes open. The woman sits beside him, very attentive to the pipe, which is all the while at his lips.

"I'll warrant," she observes, when he has been looking fixedly at her for some consecutive moments, with a singular appearance in his eyes of seeming to see her a long way off, instead of so near him: "I'll warrant you made the journey in a many ways, when you made it so often?"

"No, always in one way."

"Always in the same way?"

"Ay."

"In the way in which it was really made at last?"

"Ay."

"And always took the same pleasure in harping on it?"

"Ay."

For the time he appears unequal to any other reply than this lazy monosyllabic assent. Probably to assure herself that it is not the assent of a mere automaton, she reverses the form of her next sentence.

"Did you never get tired of it, deary, and try to call up something else for a change?"

He struggles into a sitting posture, and retorts upon her: "What do you mean? What did I want? What did I come for?"

She gently lays him back again, and before returning him the instrument he has dropped, revives the fire in it with her own breath; then says to him, coaxingly:

"Sure, sure, sure! Yes, yes, yes! Now I go along with you. You was too quick for me. I see now. You come o' purpose to take the journey. Why, I might have known it, through its standing by you so."

He answers first with a laugh, and then with a passionate setting of his teeth: "Yes, I came on purpose. When I could not bear my life, I came to get the relief, and I got it. It WAS one! It WAS one!"

This repetition with extraordinary vehemence, and the snarl of a wolf.

She observes him very cautiously, as though mentally feeling her way to her next remark. It is: "There was a fellow-traveller, deary."

"Ha, ha, ha!" He breaks into a ringing laugh, or rather yell.

"To think," he cries, "how often fellow-traveller, and yet not know it. To think how many times he went the journey, and never saw the road!"

The woman kneels upon the floor, with her arms crossed on the coverlet of the bed, close by him, and her chin upon them. In this crouching attitude she watches him. The pipe is falling from his mouth. She puts it back, and laying her hand upon his chest, moves him slightly from side to side. Upon that he speaks, as if she had spoken.

"Yes! I always made the journey first, before the changes of colours and the great landscapes and glittering processions began. They couldn't begin till it was off my mind. I had no room till then for anything else."

Once more he lapses into silence. Once more she lays her hand upon his chest, and moves him slightly to and fro, as a cat might stimulate a half-slain mouse. Once more he speaks, as if she had spoken.

"What? I told you so. When it comes to be real at last, it is so short that it seems unreal for the first time. Hark!"

"Yes, deary. I'm listening."

"Time and place are both at hand."

He is on his feet, speaking in a whisper, and as if in the dark.

"Time, place, and fellow-traveller," she suggests, adopting his tone, and holding him softly by the arm.

"How could the time be at hand unless the fellow-traveller was? Hush! The journey's made. It's over."

"So soon?"

"That's what I said to you. So soon. Wait a little. This is a vision. I shall sleep it off. It has been too short and easy. I must have a better vision than this; this is the poorest of all. No struggle, no consciousness of peril, no entreaty—and yet I never saw *that* before." With a start. "Saw what, deary?"

"Look at it! Look what a poor, mean, miserable thing it is! *That* must be real. It's over."

He has accompanied this incoherence with some wild unmeaning gestures; but they trail off into the progressive inaction of stupor, and he lies a log upon the bed.

The woman, however, is still inquisitive. With a repetition of her cat-like action she slightly stirs his body again, and listens; stirs again, and listens; whispers to it, and listens. Finding it past all rousing for the time, she slowly gets upon her feet, with an air of disappointment, and flicks the face with the back of her hand in turning from it.

But she goes no further away from it than the chair upon the hearth. She sits in it, with an elbow on one of its arms, and her chin upon her hand, intent upon him. "I heard ye say once," she croaks under her breath, "I heard ye say once, when I was lying where you're lying, and you were making your speculations upon me, "Unintelligible!' I heard you say so, of two more than me. But don't ye be too sure always; don't ye be too sure, beauty!"

Unwinking, cat-like, and intent, she presently adds: "Not so potent as it once was? Ah! Perhaps not at first. You may be more right there. Practice makes perfect. I may have learned the secret how to make ye talk, deary."

He talks no more, whether or no. Twitching in an ugly way from time to time, both as to his face and limbs, he lies heavy and silent. The wretched candle burns down; the woman takes its expiring end between her fingers, lights another at it, crams the guttering frying morsel deep into the candlestick, and rams it home with the new candle, as if she were loading some ill-savoured and unseemly weapon of witch craft; the new candle in its turn burns down; and still he lies insensible. At length what remains of the last candle is blown out, and daylight looks into the room.

It has not looked very long, when he sits up, chilled and shaking, slowly recovers consciousness of where he is, and makes himself ready to depart. The woman receives what he pays her with a grateful, "Bless ye, bless ye, deary!" and seems, tired out, to begin making herself ready for sleep as he leaves the room.

But seeming may be false or true. It is false in this case; for the moment the stairs had ceased to creak under his tread, she glides after him, muttering emphatically: "I'll not miss ye twice!"

There is no egress from the court but by its entrance. With a weird peep from the doorway, she watches for his looking back. He does not look back before disappearing, with a wavering step. She follows him, peeps from the court, sees him still faltering on without looking back, and holds him in view.

He repairs to the back of Aldersgate Street, where a door immediately opens to his knocking. She crouches in another doorway, watching that one, and easily comprehending that he puts up temporarily at that house. Her patience is unexhausted by hours. For sustenance she can, and does, buy bread within a hundred yards, and milk as it is carried past her.

He comes forth again at noon, having changed his dress, but carrying nothing in his hand, and having nothing carried for him. He is not going back into the country, therefore, just yet. She follows him a little way, hesitates, instantaneously turns confidently, and goes straight into the house he has quitted.

"Is the gentleman from Cloisterham indoors?"

"Just gone out."

"Unlucky. When does the gentleman return to Cloisterham?"

"At six this evening."

"Bless ye and thank ye. May the Lord prosper a business where a civil question, even, from a poor soul, is so civilly answered!"

"I'll not miss ye twice!" repeats the poor soul in the street, and not so civilly. "I lost ye last, where that omnibus you got into nigh your journey's end plied betwixt the station and the place. I wasn't so much as certain that you even went right on to the place. Now I know ye did. My gentleman from Cloisterham, I'll be there before ye, and bide your coming. I've swore my oath that I'll not miss ye twice!"

Accordingly, that same evening the poor soul stands in Cloisterham High Street, looking at the many quaint gables of the Nun's House, and getting through the time as she best can until nine o'clock; at which hour she has reason to suppose that the arriving omnibus passengers may have some interest for her. The friendly darkness, at that hour, renders it easy for her to ascertain whether this be so or not; and it is so, for the passenger not to be missed twice arrives among the rest.

"Now let me see what becomes of you. Go on!"

An observation addressed to the air, and yet it might be addressed to the passenger, so compliantly does he go on along the High Street until he comes to an arched gateway, at which he unexpectedly vanishes. The poor soul quickens her pace; is swift, and close upon him entering under the gateway; but only sees a postern staircase on one side of it and on the other side an ancient vaulted room, in which a large-headed, gray-haired gentleman is writing, under the odd circumstances of sitting open to the thoroughfare and eyeing all who pass, as if he were toll-taker of the gateway: though the way is free.

"Halloa!" he cries in a low voice, seeing her brought to a standstill: "who are you looking for?"

"There was a gentleman passed in here this minute, sir."

"Of course there was. What do you want with him?"

"Where do he live, deary?"

"Live? Up that staircase."

"Bless ye! Whisper. What's his name, deary?"

"Surname Jasper, Christian name John. Mr. John Jasper."

"Has he a calling, good gentleman?"

"Calling? Yes. Sings in the choir."

"In the spire?"

"Choir."

"What's that?"

Mr. Datchery rises from his papers, and comes to his doorstep. "Do you know what a cathedral is?" he asks, jocosely.

The woman nods.

"What is it?"

She looks puzzled, casting about in her mind to find a definition, when it occurs to her that it is easier to point out the substantial object itself, massive against the dark-blue sky and the early stars.

"That's the answer. Go in there at seven to-morrow morning, and you may see Mr. John Jasper, and hear him too."

"Thank ye! Thank ye!"

The burst of triumph in which she thanks him does not escape the notice of the single buffer of an easy temper living idly on his means. He glances at her; clasps his hands behind him, as the wont of such buffers is; and lounges along the echoing Precincts at her side.

"Or," he suggests, with a backward hitch of his head, "you can go up at once to Mr. Jasper's rooms there."

The woman eyes him with a cunning smile, and shakes her head.

"O! you don't want to speak to him?"

She repeats her dumb reply, and forms with her lips a soundless "No."

"You can admire him at a distance three times a day, whenever you like. It's a long way to come for that, though."

The woman looks up quickly. If Mr. Datchery thinks she is to be so induced to declare where she comes from, he is of a much easier temper than she is. But she acquits him of such an artful thought, as he lounges along, like the chartered bore of the city, with his uncovered grey hair blowing about, and his purposeless hands rattling the loose money in the pockets of his trousers.

The chink of the money has an attraction for her greedy ears. "Wouldn't you help me to pay for my traveller's lodging, dear gentleman, and to pay my way along? I am a poor soul, I am indeed, and troubled with a grievous cough."

"You know the travellers' lodging, I perceive, and are making directly for it," is Mr. Datchery's bland comment, still rattling his loose money. "Been here often, my good woman?"

"Once in all my life."

"Ay, ay?"

They have arrived at the entrance to the Monks' Vineyard. An appropriate remembrance, presenting an exemplary model for imitation, is revived in the woman's mind by the sight of the place. She stops at the gate, and says energetically:

"By this token, though you mayn't believe it, That a young gentleman gave me three-and-sixpence as I was coughing my breath away on this very grass. I asked him for three-and-sixpence, and he give it me."

"Wasn't it a little cool to name your sum?" hints Mr. Datchery, still rattling. "Isn't it customary to leave the amount open? Mightn't it have had the appearance, to the young gentleman—only the appearance—that he was rather dictated to?"

"Look'ee here, deary," she replies, in a confidential and persuasive tone, "I wanted the money to lay it out on a medicine as does me good, and as I deal in. I told the young gentleman so, and he gave it me, and I laid it out honest to the last brass farden. I want to lay out the same sum in the same way now; and if you'll give it me, I'll lay it out honest to the last brass farden again, upon my soul!"

"What's the medicine?"

"I'll be honest with you beforehand, as well as after. It's opium."

Mr. Datchery, with a sudden change of countenance, gives her a sudden look.

"It's opium, deary. Neither more nor less. And it's like a human creetur so far, that you always hear what can be said against it, but seldom what can be said in its praise."

Mr. Datchery begins very slowly to count out the sum demanded of him. Greedily watching his hands, she continues to hold forth on the great example set him.

"It was last Christmas Eve, just arter dark, the once that I was here afore, when the young gentleman gave me the three-and-six."

Mr. Datchery stops in his counting, finds he has counted wrong, shakes his money together, and begins again.

"And the young gentleman's name," she adds, "was Edwin."

Mr. Datchery drops some money, stoops to pick it up, and reddens with the exertion as he asks:

"How do you know the young gentleman's name?"

"I asked him for it, and he told it me. I only asked him the two questions, what was his Chris'en name, and whether he'd a sweetheart? And he answered, Edwin, and he hadn't."

Mr. Datchery pauses with the selected coins in his hand, rather as if he were falling into a brown study of their value, and couldn't bear to part with them. The woman looks at him distrustfully, and with her anger brewing for the event of his thinking better of the gift; but he bestows it on her as if he were abstracting his mind from the sacrifice, and with many servile thanks she goes her way.

John Jasper's lamp is kindled, and his lighthouse is shining when Mr. Datchery returns alone towards it. As mariners on a dangerous voyage, approaching an iron-bound coast, may look along the beams of the warning light to the haven lying beyond it that may never be reached, so Mr. Datchery's wistful gaze is directed to this beacon, and beyond.

His object in now revisiting his lodging is merely to put on the hat which seems so superfluous an article in his wardrobe. It is half-past ten by the Cathedral clock when he walks out into the Precincts again; he lingers and looks about him, as though, the enchanted hour when Mr. Durdles may be stoned home having struck, he had some expectation of seeing the Imp who is appointed to the mission of stoning him.

In effect, that Power of Evil is abroad. Having nothing living to stone at the moment, he is discovered by Mr. Datchery in the unholy office of stoning the dead, through the railings of the churchyard. The Imp finds this a relishing and piquing pursuit; firstly, because their resting-place is announced to be sacred; and secondly, because the tall headstones are sufficiently like themselves, on their beat in the dark, to justify the delicious fancy that they are hurt when hit.

Mr. Datchery hails him with: "Halloa, Winks!"

He acknowledges the hail with: "Halloa, Dick!" Their acquaintance seemingly having been established on a familiar footing.

"But, I say," he remonstrates, "don't yer go a-making my name public. I never means to plead to no name, mind yer. When they says to me in the Lock-up, a-going to put me down in the book, 'What's your name?' I says to them, 'Find out.' Likeways when they says, 'What's your religion?' I says, 'Find out.' "

Which, it may be observed in passing, it would be immensely difficult for the State, however statistical, to do.

"Asides which," adds the boy, "there ain't no family of Winkses."

"I think there must be."

"Yer lie, there ain't. The travellers give me the name on account of my getting no settled sleep and being knocked up all night; whereby I gets one eye roused open afore I've shut the other. That's what Winks means. Deputy's the nighest name to indict me by: but yer wouldn't catch me pleading to that, neither."

"Deputy be it always, then. We two are good friends; eh, Deputy?"

"Jolly good."

"I forgave you the debt you owed me when we first became acquainted, and many of my sixpences have come your way since; eh, Deputy?"

"Ah! And what's more yer ain't no friend o' Jarsper's. What did he go a-histing me off my legs for?"

"What indeed! But never mind him now. A shilling of mine is going your way to-night, Deputy. You have just taken in a lodger I have been speaking to; an infirm woman with a cough."

"Puffer," assents Deputy, with a shrewd leer of recognition, and smoking an imaginary pipe, with his head very much on one side and his eyes very much out of their places: "Hopeum Puffer."

"What is her name?"

"'Er Royal Highness the Princess Puffer."

"She has some other name than that; where does she live?"

"Up in London. Among the Jacks."

"The sailors?"

"I said so; Jacks, and Chayner men, and hother Knifers."

"I should like to know, through you, exactly where she lives."

"All right. Give us 'old."

A shilling passes; and, in the spirit of confidence which should pervade all business transactions between principals of honour, this piece of business is considered done.

"But here's a lark!" cries Deputy. "Where did yer think 'Er Royal Highness is a-goin' to to-morrow morning? Blest if she ain't a-goin' to the KIN-FREE-DER-EL!" He greatly prolongs the word in his ecstasy, and smites his leg, and doubles himself up in a fit of shrill laughter.

"How do you know that, Deputy?"

"Cos she told me so just now. She said she must be hup and hout o' purpose. She ses, 'Deputy, I must 'ave a early wash, and make myself as swell as I can, for I'm a-goin' to take a turn at the KIN-FREE-DER-EL!' " He separates the syllables with his former zest, and, not finding his sense of the ludicrous sufficiently relieved by stamping about on the pavement, breaks into a slow and stately dance, perhaps supposed to be performed by the Dean.

Mr. Datchery received the communication with a well-satisfied though pondering face, and breaks up the conference. Returning to his quaint lodging, and sitting long over the supper of bread-and-cheese and salad and ale which Mrs. Tope has left prepared for him, he still sits when his supper is finished. At length he rises, throws open the door of a corner cupboard, and refers to a few uncouth chalked strokes on its inner side.

"I like," says Mr. Datchery, "the old tavern way of keeping scores. Illegible except to the scorer. The scorer not committed, the scored debited with what is against him. Hum; ha! A very small score this; a very poor score!"

He sighs over the contemplation of its poverty, takes a bit of chalk from one of the cupboard shelves, and pauses with it in his hand, uncertain what addition to make to the account.

"I think a moderate stroke," he concludes, "is all I am justified in scoring up;" so, suits the action to the word, closes the cupboard, and goes to bed.

A brilliant morning shines on the old city. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful, with a lusty ivy gleaming in the sun, and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods, and fields—or, rather, from the one great garden of the whole cultivated island in its yielding time—penetrate into the Cathedral, subdue its earthly odour, and preach the Resurrection and the Life. The cold stone tombs of centuries ago grow warm; and flecks of brightness dart into the sternest marble corners of the building, fluttering there like wings.

Comes Mr. Tope with his large keys, and yawningly unlocks and sets open. Come Mrs. Tope and attendant sweeping sprites. Come, in due time, organist and bellows-boy, peeping down from the red curtains in the loft, fearlessly flapping dust from books up at that remote elevation, and whisking it from stops and pedals. Come sundry rooks, from various quarters of the sky, back to the great tower; who may be presumed to enjoy vibration, and to know that bell and organ are going to give it them. Come a very small and straggling congregation indeed: chiefly from Minor Canon Corner and the Precincts. Come Mr. Crisparkle, fresh and bright; and his ministering brethren, not quite so fresh and bright. Come the Choir in a hurry (always in a hurry, and struggling into their nightgowns at the last moment, like children shirking bed), and comes John Jasper leading their line. Last of all comes Mr. Datchery into a stall, one of a choice empty collection very much at his service, and glancing about him for Her Royal Highness the Princess Puffer.

The service is pretty well advanced before Mr. Datchery can discern Her Royal Highness. But by that time he has made her out, in the shade. She is behind a pillar, carefully withdrawn from the Choir-master's view, but regards him with the closest attention. All unconscious of her presence, he chants and sings. She grins when he is most musically fervid, and—yes, Mr. Datchery sees her do it—shakes her fist at him behind the pillar's friendly shelter.

Mr. Datchery looks again, to convince himself. Yes, again! As ugly and withered as one of the fantastic carvings on the under brackets of the stall seats, as malignant as the Evil One, as hard as the big brass eagle holding the sacred books upon his wings (and according to the sculptor's representation of his ferocious attributes, not at all converted by them), she hugs herself in her lean arms, and then shakes both fists at the leader of the Choir.

And at that moment, outside the grated door of the Choir, having eluded the vigilance of Mr. Tope by shifty resources in which he is an adept, Deputy peeps, sharp-eyed, through the bars, and stares astounded from the threatener to the threatened.

The service comes to an end, and the servitors disperse to breakfast. Mr. Datchery accosts his last new acquaintance outside, when the Choir (as much in a hurry to get their bedgowns off, as they were but now to get them on) have scuffled away.

"Well, mistress. Good morning. You have seen him?"

"*I*'ve seen him, deary; *I*'ve seen him!"

"And you know him?"

"Know him! Better far than all the Reverend Parsons put together know him."

Mrs. Tope's care has spread a very neat, clean breakfast ready for her lodger. Before sitting down to it, he opens his corner-cupboard door; takes his bit of chalk from its shelf; adds one thick line to the score, extending from the top of the cupboard door to the bottom; and then falls to with an appetite.

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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY LTD.,
LONDON AND AYLESBURY

KV-027-713